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THE INDEPENDENT

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THE WINNERS AND LOSERS OF SUMMER

IN THE TABLOID
ARNOLD WESKER STILL CHIPPY AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

CITY+
CAREER vs BABY TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Gay priest reveals Catholic 'boot camp'

Clare Garner

A Roman Catholic priest has given a unique insight into day-to-day life at a remote and little-known rehabilitation home used by the church to treat alcoholic, gay and paedophiliac clergymen.

The priest was sent to the residential treatment centre in Gloucestershire after his bishop found out that he was a practising homosexual. Writing anonymously in today's *Independent*, he gives a detailed account of his week-long assessment at Our Lady of Victory – a place he describes as being like "an open prison" – situated high on a Cotswold hill in Brownshill, near Stroud.

The church is guarded about life inside the centre. It is run by the Servants of the Paraclete, a religious congregation of men dedicated to ministering to priests and brothers with "personal difficulties". Anyone who is "sent to Stroud", as Catholic circles put it, for longer than the initial assessment must sign a confidentiality contract.

To residents living near the centre, it is simply a "drying out clinic for boozy brethren". But the priest recalls a "sense of listlessness" among inmates, "as if, realising the game was up, all the fight, all the desire for independence had gone." He believes the "glassiness in their eyes" betrays "some form of brainwashing". "How," he asks, "is paedophilia 'cured' or any other form of addiction, sexual or otherwise?"

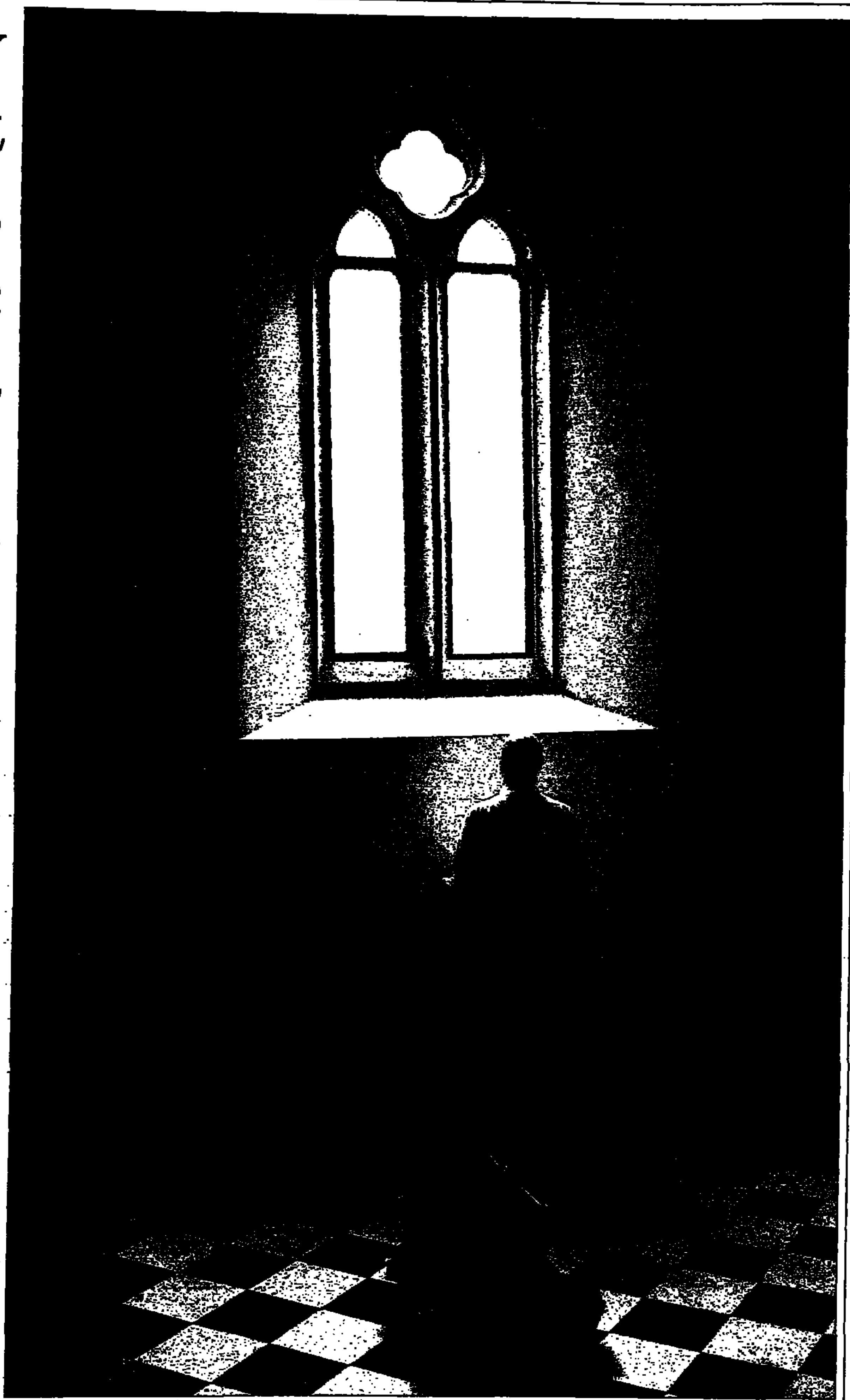
Our Lady of Victory purports to offer "therapy in a spiritual context". But according to Father Kieran Conroy, director of the Catholic Media Office, the approach is more "therapist's boot camp" than "therapist's couch". Fr Conroy said he understood the treatment to be "quite confrontational". "They do face you with your own shortcomings and there's no question of denial, at all. It's a process of knocking down and building up again, which I think some people find difficult to deal with because they are particularly vulnerable."

The Servants of the Paraclete was founded in 1947 by Father Gerald Fitzgerald, a priest from the Archdiocese of Boston, in the United States. It has about 30 priests at Stroud, and there is a waiting list. Our Lady of Victory hit the headlines in 1993 when Fr Sean Seddon, a 38-year-old Roman Catholic priest, was sent there to try to forget about his six-year romance with a teacher. On learning that his lover had lost their baby, he committed suicide by throwing himself under a railway station near the retreat.

Fr Conroy believes the majority of residents at Stroud are alcoholics on the Chemical Dependency Programme, based on the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. "In the case of child abuse it would be assessment rather than treatment," he added, "because most people realise that paedophilia is not a condition they can treat successfully."

He said Stroud is not an alternative to the courts. Some of the priests undergoing treatment for child abuse have served prison sentences. At the end of the treatment, staff at Stroud assess the paedophiliac priest's risk of reoffending, according to Father Conroy. "If they choose to remain in the priesthood – and presumably they will; otherwise they wouldn't have spent six months or two years there – the church has to decide where the safest place for that person to work is. If he is high risk they must ensure that he is in a job that has little or zero risk of contact with children."

The priest's tale, page 14



The anonymous priest who was sent for treatment for his homosexuality Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Agreement reached on IRA arms

David McKittrick
Ireland Correspondent

Britain and Ireland last night took the significant step of signing an international agreement on arms decommissioning in readiness for next month's crucial political talks.

The participation of Unionist parties in talks remains in doubt, largely because the decommissioning arrangements are regarded by Unionists as too loose and failing to guarantee actual arms handovers during the negotiations.

Nonetheless, London and Dublin yesterday pressed ahead with the signing of a formal agreement establishing an arms commission. This body, which is expected to be under the chairmanship of Canadian general John de Chastelain, is to consider the arms issue in parallel with the political talks.

The next step in the intricate process leading to the opening of talks is to come later this week when the Northern Ireland Secretary, Dr Mo Mowlam, is expected to confirm Sinn Fein's eligibility to attend.

Only a sudden outbreak of IRA violence could prevent this coming about, and the fact is that the organisation has stopped all its violence, according to security sources, "like turning off a tap". The security forces have concluded that the IRA has simply desisted from surveillance and studying of potential targets.

The IRA's so-called punishment beatings, in which youths and others in republican areas were often very brutally assaulted, have also come to a sudden halt. This is regarded as an advance of the IRA's first 1994-96 cessation, during which such attacks continued.

'I'm hopeful the Unionists will be there but I don't know more than that'
Mo Mowlam

There are no guarantees that this abnormally pacific state of affairs will continue, but for the moment at least the IRA is clearly at pains to be on its best behaviour while the Government assesses the state of its ceasefire. Its six-week "quarantine" period ends on Sunday.

At the moment the major point of paramilitary uncertainty lies not within republicanism but in the loyalist underworld, where there are rumblings of uncertainty centring on the breakaway Loyalist Volunteer Force.

Against this background the two governments last night formally put in place an international commission to deal with the arms issue. The Unionist objection is that although both governments are committed to pressing the IRA and loyalists on arms handovers there are no timetables and no guarantees.

David Trimble's Ulster Unionist party has as yet taken no final decision on attendance at the talks, and is presently carrying out a "community consultation exercise" involving meetings with churches, business organisations and others.

The general feeling in the party is that it should not walk away from the talks, which could be crucial to the future of Northern Ireland, but opinion is more divided on whether Unionist representatives should sit down face-to-face with Sinn Fein.

Sinn Fein yesterday attempted to pressurise the Government into insisting on face-to-face arrangements rather than any idea of negotiating at one remove. Mitchel McLaughlin of Sinn Fein declared: "My answer to proximity talks is a flat no. This will require face-to-face negotiations. How can there be confidence-building measures by proxy? There have to be talks across the table and let David Trimble, if he has the confidence in his argument, present his case."

Dr Mowlam yesterday acknowledged that the Unionist position was uncertain. She said: "I'm not completely confident that we will have everybody around the table. That's still up for grabs. The real problem would be if the Ulster Unionists did not have their feet under the table and Unionism was not heard. I am hopeful they will be there but I don't know any more than that."

QUICKLY

De Klerk steps down

FW de Klerk, South Africa's last white president and the man who let Nelson Mandela out of jail, resigned yesterday, aged 61, as leader of the opposition National Party. Page 9

Montserrat visit

Downing Street and Clare Short strove to deny that she had been side-lined by the setting up of cross-departmental committee to deal with the Montserrat crisis. A junior minister is flying out. Page 8

Prescott backs adviser in shares row

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

John Prescott has been forced to defend his appointment of a special adviser whose company may profit from the government reforms he oversees.

David Taylor, who is advising Mr Prescott on plans for a network of regional development agencies, also runs and holds shares in a firm which is likely to bid for grants from them. He earns £140,000 per year as chief executive of Enterprise PLC and also holds shares in the firm.

The unpaid part-time adviser to Mr Prescott is also a former chief executive of English Partnerships, the development agency which owns the site of the Millennium Exhibition. The agency's future is under review as part of the consultation on the new regional agencies.

Enterprise PLC, formerly Lancashire Enterprises, was set up in the 1980s as the privatised development arm of Lancashire County Council and made a profit of £3 million last year. Mr Taylor owns 3,000 shares in the company and has an option on a further 300,000.

Owen Oyston, the Lancashire millionaire serving a jail sentence for rape, is a former director and still a shareholder. The Labour MP for Liverpool Riverside, Louise Ellman, is a director.

Mr Prescott was forced to comment in response to a letter from Gillian Shephard, the shadow leader of the Commons. She argued that Mr Taylor should either relinquish his shares in the company - as the industry minister Lord Simon was forced to do with his British Petroleum shares - or resign from his post in Mr Prescott's office. Enterprise PLC was reported to have confirmed that it intended to bid for Regional Development Agency funds, she said.

However, the Deputy Prime Minister maintained that he had acted in accordance with the ministerial code of conduct. "David Taylor... serves me personally as an unpaid special adviser and is able to bring to bear substantial expertise, particularly on regeneration and regional issues. While I entirely agree that the handling of these issues needs care they are not different in principle to those which the previous administration had to address and I can assure you that the necessary care is being taken."

Japanese mafiosi go crazy for Tamagotchi

Richard Lloyd Parry
Tokyo

The Tamagotchi, the Japanese "digital pet" enjoying a worldwide craze, has an appeal so extraordinarily wide that it has attracted Japan's notorious gangsters, the *yakuza*.

They have mounted a vicious campaign to get supplies. Workers at Bandai, Tamagotchi's Tokyo-based maker, have received death-threats against themselves and their families from underworld figures desperate to cash in on the Tamagotchi's popularity. Despite a drive to increase production, Bandai's stocks of the toy, which normally sells for 1,980 yen (£10.50), are exhausted. At the height of the craze, the toys were changing hands for upwards of ¥50,000.

"Dealing in Tamagotchi is more valuable than dealing in drugs, with the advantage that possession is perfectly legal," said a Bandai employee.

The trouble began earlier in the year when individuals approached the company, asking for direct supplies of the toy, bypassing the expensive distribution system. "We politely refused," said the employee, "and they started calling up and being less polite and making veiled threats on the phone. Then the management started getting anonymous threats against their lives, saying 'We know where you live, we know where your kids go to school'."

In April the company's headquarters was visited by the *uyoku* - right-wingers who drive round Tokyo blaring martial music and patriotic slogans from megaphones on the roofs of their vans. The rightists, often used by the *yakuza*, used their sound-vans publicly to accuse the company of corrupting children with the Tamagotchi, and withholding supplies to stimulate demand.

So far the threats have not been acted on and the vans stopped appearing after an injunction was served on them for noise pollution. But Bandai employees have been advised not to use bags bearing the company's logo and to avoid discussing their work in public. If they want a long life, that is.

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news

significant shorts

Children resuscitated after 'hanging incident'

Two young children were in hospital in a "very serious condition" last night after they stopped breathing in what is thought to be a hanging incident.

The youngsters - a girl believed to be aged 13 and a 10-year-old whose gender had not been revealed – were found at an address in Baldwins Lane, Croxley Green, near Watford, shortly after 4.30pm, said Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Ambulance Service.

They were resuscitated by paramedics at the scene and in an ambulance on the way to Watford General Hospital, but their lives were still thought to be in considerable danger.

Hertfordshire police were unable to confirm or deny suggestions that the two children had been involved in a hanging incident.

Officers face action over stripper

Twenty-two police officers are to face disciplinary action over a strip show at a police training college, it was disclosed yesterday. The punishment follows allegations that they hired a stripper for a birthday party, and that she had chocolate sauce and whipped cream licked from her naked body by one officer.

Six of the officers involved are to be charged with discreditable conduct – which could lead to dismisal – with one facing further charges of falsehood and prevarication, while the rest are to be formally "admonished" or given "advice" over their conduct.

The Police Complaints Authority said it was recommending action against the officers following allegations they had "engaged in or acquiesced to unacceptable behaviour with a female stripper".

Lancashire Police asked the PCA to investigate after a woman officer complained about the show last February at the force's headquarters training school near Preston. **Jason Bennetto**

TV sports presenter fights cancer

Television sports presenter Helen Rollason is fighting stomach cancer, it was revealed yesterday. Ms Rollason, who was the first woman to present the BBC's flagship sports programme *Grandstand*, was diagnosed with the illness on Monday, a spokeswoman said.

The 41-year-old former PE teacher was Sports Presenter of the Year in 1996 and has anchored BBC2's *Sport On Friday*.

A colleague said: "She's very determined and in a very positive frame of mind to fight it. All of us here at the BBC are wishing her well and looking forward to seeing her back in due course." Ms Rollason, who has a teenage daughter, is due to have an operation within the next few days.

Last year, she led the BBC's coverage from the Paralympics in Atlanta, Georgia, and has received awards in the past for her work with disability sports dating back to 1990.

Kinnock takes up truckers' fight

Neil Kinnock, the EU transport commissioner, has personally intervened in an effort to end the 10-month battle by British truckers to win compensation from the French government over last year's lorry blockade.

According to a letter from his office to road haulage associations, officials say that "Commissioner Kinnock is particularly concerned" about French authorities' lack of initiative. Mr Kinnock will, the letter states, "use all possible means to ensure that the claims are processed quickly and affected firms compensated."

The 10-day dispute bought the French road system to a halt last November. Despite the loss of trade, the French government has refused nearly all claims from British hauliers - whose total costs have been put at more than £1.5m. **Randeep Ramesh**

Apology after needle mix-up

A hospital apologised to two women following claims that the same needle was used to take blood samples from them both. Mrs Hayley Cross, 22, from Yate, near Bristol, was considering legal action after the incident. She was in fear of having contracted the Hepatitis B virus from the test, taken after she gave birth to her daughter, she said. Officials at Southmead Hospital, Bristol, gave both women the all-clear after they underwent new tests to ensure they did not have the infection. A spokeswoman said: "A full investigation has yet to be completed on this extraordinary incident.

Jurassic plums, at a store near you

A new fruit being marketed as a "Dinosaur Egg" goes on sale today in an attempt to attract even the most fruit-hating youngsters to healthy eating. The Californian-grown fruit, made by crossing an apricot and a plum, is officially known as a "pluot".

The dinosaur reference follows the success of the film *Jurassic Park* which, the backers hope, will lure young people into buying the fruit and boosting their vitamin intake.

The fruits are the size of a small nectarine with purple, speckled skin, each one bearing a pink dinosaur sticker proclaiming it a "Dinosaur Egg".

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people

Maureen Rees: BBC series turned her overnight into a national TV celebrity

Learner from Hell sees her life flash before her eyes

Maureen Rees, the woman whose televised driving lessons captivated the nation, saw her life flash before her eyes yesterday.

But it was not because of another close shave in her beloved Lada, called Betsy. Instead, her new-found celebrity status had earned the attention of Michael Aspel, the host of the television programme *This Is Your Life*, and the big red book in which he tells the life stories of his hapless victims.

Mrs Rees, 55, from Grangetown, Cardiff, and her husband, David, were driving in west London and stopped at a car-wash.

Mr Aspel intervened as they were heading for the exit. "Oh no, oh my God, you swines," was Mrs Rees's reaction to the news that she was being whisked to a TV studio for another dose of media attention. A BBC spokesman said: "She was gobsmacked. She didn't want to drive to the studios – she left that to David."

Mrs Rees, a cleaner and grandmother, became an overnight star when the BBC documentary *The Driving School* showed her desperate attempts to pass her test.

Dubbed the "learner driver from Hell," her adventures gripped viewers and sent the series to number four in the television ratings charts, with a weekly audience of more than 12 million.

The programme showed her flirting with death and disaster – including nearly running over her husband. The nation divided over whether Mr Rees was a saint for tolerating her appalling driving or an unfair bully for the way he hectored her, at times grabbing the steering wheel from her hands.

She eventually passed her test at the seventh try, after spending £5,000 on lessons.

Like Eddie the Eagle and his ill-fated skiing exploits, Mrs Rees's grand display of ineptitude has proved a launch pad to national fame.

The car maker Lada was so delighted with the publicity generated by her efforts in her old car that they presented her with a new model. And she has been snapped up to be a television presenter herself for a new daytime show, the *Really Useful Show*, in which she will be learning car maintenance.

Yet Mrs Rees maintains a down-to-earth attitude to this turn in events: "I am just a regular housewife with a face like the back of a bus. I'm just an ordinary housewife but I've got personality and that's what people want to see." ***Louise Jury***

Parents' plea over murder of 'most precious' son

The parents of 12-year-old murder victim Thomas Marshall yesterday made an emotional appeal for help in catching his killer.

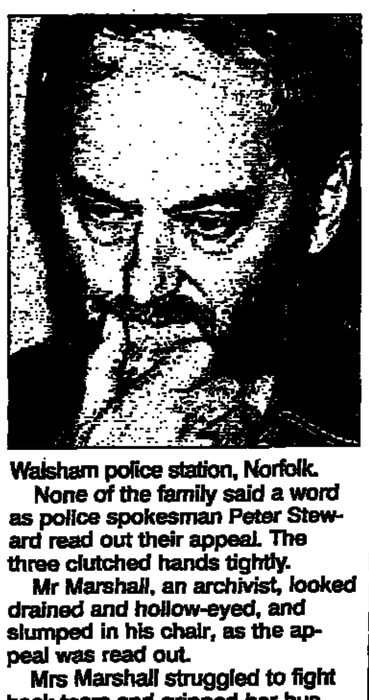
As the statement from John (right) and Carol Marshall was read out during a press conference, police revealed that Thomas may have been lured to his death by someone he befriended via his CB radio.

The couple's statement said: "Words cannot express the pain we feel at losing the most precious thing we had."

Detectives said that Thomas, from Happisburgh, Norfolk, had regularly used a CB radio at his home and used the call sign "Jackpot".

Thomas had told his parents that he was going to visit a friend in the neighbouring seaside village of Eccles, before he disappeared at around 6pm last Thursday. His body was discovered the following day, 50 miles away, in a picnic area off the A11. He had been strangled.

The couple sat alongside Thomas's uncle, Martin Fiddy, at the 10-minute news conference at North



Walsham police station, Norfolk.

None of the family said a word as police spokesman Peter Steward read out their appeal. The three clutched hands tightly.

Mr Marshall, an archivist, looked drained and hollow-eyed, and slumped in his chair, as the appeal was read out.

Mrs Marshall struggled to fight back tears and gripped her husband's hand fiercely.

The statement added: "Thomas was at the start of a life full of promise. Please do not allow another child to be deprived of his future in such a brutal way." ***Jason Bennetto***

Reg Kray a step closer to freedom

Reg Kray, the former East End gangster, was moved yesterday to a low-risk prison in the first step towards gaining his freedom.

Kray, 63, was given a life sentence in 1969 for killing Jack "The Hat" McVitie, who was stabbed to death. His 30-year "life" tariff expires in May next year and his supporters hope he will be granted parole.

He was moved from the high security Maidstone prison to the low security, category C jail at Wayland in Norfolk, where he will be offered offender behaviour programmes and "enhanced thinking" training.

If he is no longer considered a risk to the public he could then be released under licence.

His new wife, Roberta, said: "This is one step closer to his eventual release, the first glimpse of light at the end of a very long tunnel."

Kray and his twin brother, Ron, ran one of the most feared gangs in Britain during the 1960s from their strong hold in the East End of London. Ron Kray was jailed for life for the murder of gangsters George Cornell and Jack McVitie in 1968 and died of a heart attack in 1995 in Broadmoor hospital.

briefing

SOCIETY

Parental supervision linked to youth delinquency

Children who lack proper parental supervision are more likely to turn to crime than those from stable family backgrounds, according to a report published yesterday.

Long-term separation from a parent, conflict between parents and harsh or erratic discipline all increased the chances of a child offending, the survey by the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (Nacro) found. Alternatively, the provision of stability, supervision, love and care in the family home meant that youngsters were less likely to become caught up in delinquent behaviour.

Situations of chronic stress, frequent or prolonged spells of unemployment, physical or mental disabilities within a family, and poverty were all linked to inadequate parenting.

Nacro said the reportunderlined the urgent need for the Government to provide measures to bolster family life. It marked the start of a year-long campaign by Nacro to highlight measures it believes are needed to create a safer society.

Families and Crime, £2.50, from Nacro, 169 Clapham Road, London SW9 OPU.

HEALTH

Gold rings can prevent arthritis

Wearing gold rings can prevent arthritis, researchers have found. After noticing that a 62-year-old woman who had had rheumatoid arthritis for 47 years was significantly less affected in the finger on which she wore her wedding ring, researchers decided to x-ray the ring fingers of 30 ring wearers and 25 non-ring wearers who had had the disease for at least two years.

The results, published in *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases*, showed that the knuckle joint of the ring fingers of those who wore rings all or most of the time were up to three times less badly eroded than the corresponding joint in the other hand. No such difference was found in the non-ring wearers.

The authors, from the City Hospital, Birmingham, suggest that gold from the rings could pass through the skin "downstream" to the nearby knuckle joint in sufficient quantities to delay erosion. Gold, they note, has been used to treat rheumatic disease since the turn of the century. **Jeremy Laurance**

ENERGY

Japan declares cold fusion dead

Cold fusion is dead, according to the Japanese government, which has spent 2.3bn yen (£12.5m) in the past five years trying to see whether the process that powers the sun could be reproduced at room temperature in a laboratory test tube.

The project – to create helium atoms from hydrogen in a test tube, and harness the energy to create incredibly cheap power – will receive no funding next year, said an official at the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI). He added that the technology simply didn't hold enough promise to be worth the money.

The idea of cold fusion first leapt into the headlines in 1989, when Stanley Pons and Martin Fleischmann announced that they had generated huge power outputs from a bench setup using electrodes made of the metal paladium.

Pons and Fleischmann claimed to have a "slow release" of energy. But the work was denounced, and by 1992 most researchers had rejected the sensational findings after consistently failing to reproduce them or find supporting evidence.

Japan was eager to investigate it because it relies on imported oil for much of its energy needs. **Charles Arthur**

BROADCASTING

Breasts prove a ratings winner

Despite hopes that the British might have become more mature about their bodies, it would seem that what has brought readers to the *Sun* for the last 25 years is perfectly capable of bringing viewers to Channel 4.

***Breasts*, a documentary featuring up to a dozen topless women earnestly discussing their feelings about their eponymous endowments, entered Channel 4's top 10 most watched programmes, it was revealed yesterday. More than 3m people tuned in, enabling the programme to compete with Channel 4's usual top-rated programmes, like *Brookside* and *Friends*.**

In fact, it was Channel 4's seventh most viewed programme, and an analysis by advertising agency The Network showed that 51 per cent of the viewers were men. **Paul McCann**

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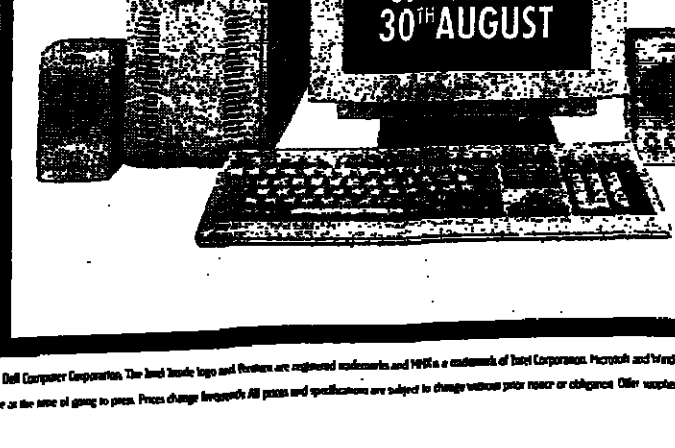

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Summer of '97. How was it for you?

You win some, you lose some... **Kim Sengupta** on the vicissitudes of the season

It was the best of times, and the worst of times. For many the sun shone brightly all the way, but others, and their egos, took public drenchings. As Tony Blair surveys the state of the nation on his first day back from a three week holiday, *The Independent* takes a look at the winners and losers over the summer months.

As the silly season draws to a close one woman has been dominating the headlines. The dalliance of Princess Diana with Dodi, the son of Harrod's owner Mohamed Al Fayed, has occupied acres of newspaper space, and made some of the paparazzi very wealthy indeed.

In between her repeated holidays with playboy Dodi, the princess found time to visit victims of landmines in Bosnia, where to show her compassion, she cried a lot and hugged perfect strangers. All these were terrific photo opportunities, and confirmed her as the "Queen of Hearts". She was, as the tabloids would say "a right Royal winner".

Also a winner is Mohamed Al Fayed. He and his brother Ali may not have succeeded in getting British passports, but the Egyptian-born tycoon has a good chance of seeing his son end up as the stepfather of the future king.

This is not his only triumph of the summer. His anger with the establishment led to the public humiliation of former minister Jonathan Aitken after the loss of his High Court libel case. A number of other prominent Tories had already disappeared from public life thanks to information supplied by Mr Al Fayed. Among them was Neil Hamilton, who is now trying to carve out a new life with his formidable wife Christine.

Perhaps Mr and Mrs Hamilton have been influenced by the cult series *This Life*, about a group of twentysomethings leading a hedonistic lifestyle in London. Many of the cast are now household names with glittering futures ahead.

Not everyone has been so lucky. Even in space you can have a bummer of a summer. When British-born astronaut Michael Foale arrived at the *Mir* space station he could not have possibly known it was going to turn into the first extra-terrestrial soap opera.

And if one cannot get away from misfortune even up there, what chance did the earthbound Peter Mandelson have? On 2 May he was the great architect of the most comprehensive electoral victory this century, arguably the second most powerful man in Britain. Then came The Dome.

The minister without portfolio has been facing his own personal millenium meltdown. The saga of The Dome, with the contract first going to a German company and then an American one after a public row has shown a chink in Mr Mandelson's urbane armour.

The dome was also a thread which bound another bright young star expected to be launched into the Blair firmament, and now left spluttering in the cold. Bob Ayling, the chief executive of British Airways, is fronting the New Millenium Experience. He is also the man whose proposed reforms of his airline led to strikes, with public sympathy seemingly on the side of the employees.

His consolation is that he was instrumental in introducing a new form of industrial action, workers going sick in droves. The battle cry is no longer "one out, all out", but "sorry, can't work today, got a headache".

The Mandelson factor is also present in a group whose reputation lost out, MI5. The James Bonds targeted the minister himself as a suspected communist fellow traveller. When not eavesdropping on civil liberties groups the master spies were allegedly drunkenly telling their friends outside the service about the most secret operations.

One thing the blundering agents did stumble across was a deficiency in the banking system. Allegedly hundreds of thousands of pounds were paid into the bank account of *Guardian* journalist Victoria Brittain by Libyan sources for the head of security of the Ghanaian military regime to take libel action against *The Independent*. Ms Brittain never discovered the source of the money.

The Secretary of State for International Development took a singular approach about the leaders of Montserrat, the Caribbean island suffering from a volcanic eruption, accusing them of treating Britain like a "milch cow" and falling into the dependency culture. Her comments caused outrage on Montserrat.

This was not, of course the first time Ms Short's statements had caused controversy. Just a few months previously earlier in the summer she had criticised the millenium dome, claiming it was a waste of money. This would not have endeared her to Mr Mandelson.

Sunny outlook: For some, summer was uncomplicated by politics or other such trivia, as visitors to Polesdon Lacey, in Surrey, would have agreed Photograph: Tom Pilston

Good season... bad season

Winners
Diana, Princess of Wales
Cast of *This Life*
British tourists abroad
Wine drinkers
Mike Atherton
Mark Taylor
Mohamed Al Fayed

Losers
Clare Short
Peter Mandelson
British farmers
Apple growers
Bob Ayling
Jonathan Aitken

Restored to glory: Britain's green and pleasant land

Alexandra Williams

Winner: Once parched and drought-hit, our gardens have sprung to life again

Britain's gardens have emerged lush and blooming compared with the hardened, parched slabs posing as lawns this time last year.

Although flowerbeds have been frozen, fried and flooded this summer, holidaymakers are returning this week to find their gardens have not only survived but prospered beyond their most optimistic expectations.

Christopher Bailes, curator of regional gardens for the Royal Horticultural Society, said: "The season's been very curious and topsy-turvy. The average lawn must be somewhat confused by now, but as autumn turns in it's looking pretty good."

Lawns have had a confusing season with drought warnings being issued as June was declared the wettest this century. Waterlogged roses suffered "brown ball" rather than blooming and sweetpeas resembled straw as they shrivelled in the July heat. But lettuce, beetroot, cauliflower and strawberries sat resplendent on the plate.

Veteran gardener Fred Downham, who defected to Classic FM's *Classic Gardening Forum* in 1994 from *Gardeners' Question Time*, said many people have been flummoxed by the erratic weather. "Usually the weather runs a pattern, but this summer one day it could be torrential rain and the next, as sunny as you like," he said.

"We had a good crop of cauliflower ... It's been a good year for butterflies too which is now disastrous for the likes of cabbages. They are riddled with caterpillars."

At London's Kew Gardens, one of the world's premier botanical gardens, the schizophrenic season has deterred visitors. In June, attendance was down by 25 per cent. The marketing manager, Roger Joiner, said: "It bucketed down in June and was pretty dismal. July was so-so and August not a lot better. But our shops and catering facilities did well." For the National Gardens Scheme Charitable Trust, which opens 3,500 mainly private gardens to the public to raise money for charity, the unpredictable weather has produced mixed results. In Nottinghamshire, organiser Gillian Hill said: "If it's wet in June then it's a disaster for us. Takings here can be as high as £30,000 but we fear this year they may have fallen to £24,000."

But her colleague in Barnstaple, Devon, raved about the downpours. Mervyn Feesey, who specialises in growing ornamental grasses, said: "Our gardens have never looked so lush and full of colour. We've had lovely rain and warm spells too, it's been fantastic. In our area we've made about £50,000."

How a fairytale paradise became a hell on earth

Andew Gumbel

Loser: Once an exclusive jewel, the isle of Capri has been overrun by the hordes

The idle rich who used to spend their summers on Capri in the 1950s and 1960s might remember it as a fairy-tale island of dizzyingly beautiful landscapes, secluded villas and charming aristocratic parties strewn with bright summer flowers.

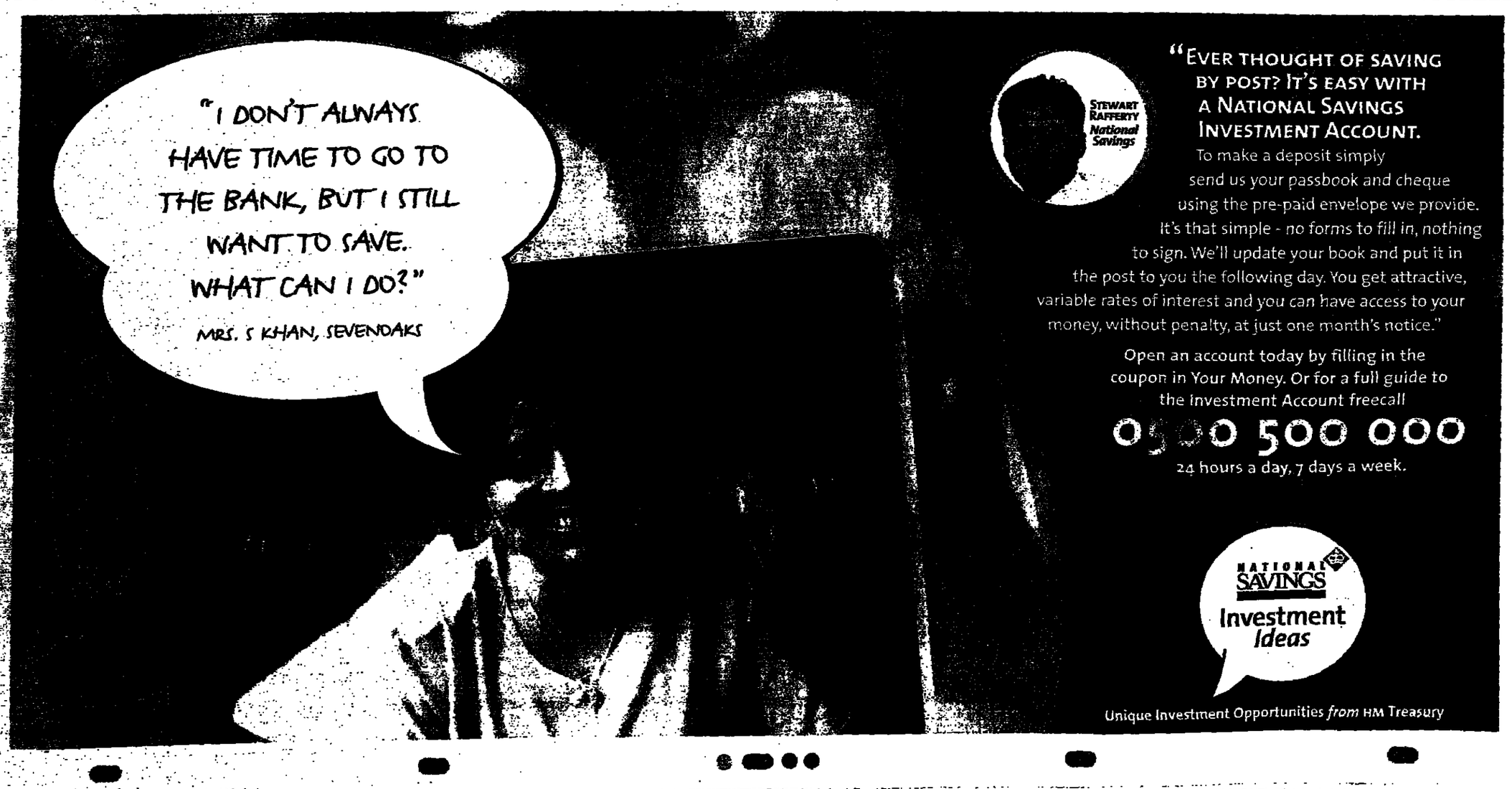
Anyone who has had the misfortune to spend their holidays there in the past summer, though, would probably characterise it as an upmarket vision of hell on earth. Where to begin with the litany of horrors? With the ferry delays and cancellations that have forced more than one would-be jet-setter to idle away the hours sitting on the dock of Naples harbour? With the invasion of unemployed Neapolitans, who chose the main square in Capri town for an Assumption Day demonstration on August 15?

Perhaps one should mention the condemnation of Capri's waters as some of the dirtiest in Italy, a PR disaster that struck at almost the same time as a sewage tank burst near the Faraglioni, the island's natural rock "lighthouses". And the water shortages, caused by a leak in the main pipe linking Capri to the mainland, that left half the villa owners high and dry for days on end. Even the Bar Tiberio in Capri's *piazzetta* was forced to serve its drinks in paper cups for lack of dishwater.

Times have been rough indeed for the Capri regulars, who yearn so much to get away from the riff-raff but constantly run up against hordes of day-tripping tourists who flock to the island, dump their rubbish and then leave again before they have even had the courtesy to spend any significant part of their holiday budget.

"I don't want to come over all pitiful, but my wife has serious physical problems," complained Giuseppe Liverino, a Florentine who has been coming to Capri for 25 years, in an interview with a local paper. "The toilets are in a state that I will leave to your imagination. We can't use the washing machine and we can't do the dishes. And this is what they call going on holiday."

The man at the eye of the storm is Capri's capricious mayor, Costantino Federico, a rather tragicomic figure who has tried for years to raise the social tone of his paradise island but invariably fails at every turn. In the past he suggested turning Capri into a mini-principality with Princess Stephanie of Monaco as monarch. He has tried to ban bare torsos and talks incessantly, but in vain, of imposing a daily quota on the number of back-packers besmirching his gilded kingdom.



British car workers top the league

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

The British car factory worker, once a joke around the world, is now among the most efficient in the industry, thanks mainly to the Japanese.

The trail-blazing Nissan plant at Sunderland, which began the Japanese invasion 10 years ago, knocked General Motors' Eisenach factory off the top of the European car makers' productivity table last year, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit. Each of Nissan's 4,100 workers on Wearside made an average of 73.2 vehicles per employee last year, easily outstripping the 67.7 for GM's older Opel factory.

Yet the huge gulf in efficiency between Japanese car plants built over the past decade in the UK and longer established British car factories shows little sign of diminishing.

The report shows Rover's biggest manufacturing plant, at Longbridge near Birmingham, languishing in 19th place near the bottom of the league table, with the Unit describing productivity as "generally poor". The average Longbridge employee turned out just 28.2 cars last year, although the survey admitted that by the end of 1996 the rate was back up to 35 cars following the introduction of new models.

Other Japanese manufacturers, who chose the UK for its cheap and flexible labour force and generous government investment grants, have also beaten the best of indigenous European car makers. Toyota's Burnaston plant in Derbyshire jumped from seventh place to third in the table, while Honda kept its hold on fourth place, making 64.2 cars per employee.

For Toyota the figures represent a particular victory after complaints by the company that UK components suppliers could not meet their exacting quality demands. The improvement in UK productivity could also influence Toyota's ongoing review of sites for a new European factory to make a small car, with the UK currently battling with France and Eastern Europe.

Rover said the report was "meaningless" because it did not discriminate between plants like Longbridge, which carried out most manufacturing processes on site and companies which imported part-finished products like seats and engines. "They're little more than screwdriver operations," said a Rover spokesman.

But the figures will come as a shock to those in the British motor industry who had argued that companies like Rover, Ford and General Motors' Vauxhall subsidiary had almost matched Japanese efficiency standards. Billions of pounds have been poured into "traditional" British plants like Longbridge, Dagenham or Luton as car makers adopted Japanese "just in time" manufacturing techniques.

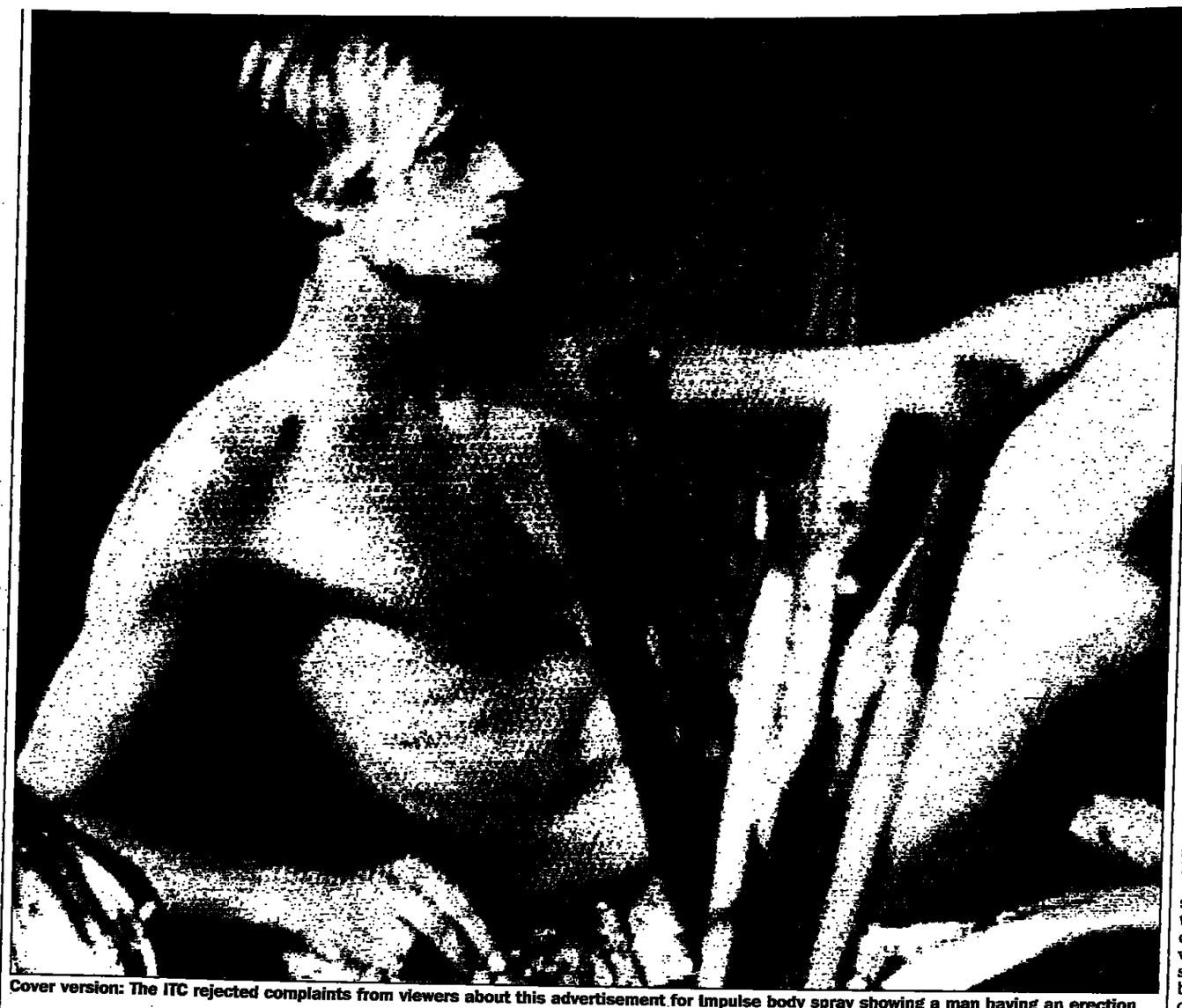
The biggest advantage for the Japanese was in labour flexibility, with workers allocated to the shop floor to meet forecast demand and others redeployed elsewhere on activities such as retraining. Older British plants, in contrast, tended to get their predictions wrong, ending with companies closing plants or cutting the number of shifts when production fell.

Nick Oliver, from the Judge Institute of Management studies at Cambridge University, warned against reading too much into the figures, but added: "The reality is that Japanese methods are not bolt-on appendages, they are central to the manufacturing process. It's a way of life to the Japanese."

Motoring to success

The top 10 in terms of vehicles produced per employee in 1996 were:

COMPANY	PLANT	VEHICLES/ EMPLOYEE
1. Nissan	Sunderland	73.2
2. General Motors	Eisenach, Germany	67.7
3. Toyota	Burnaston, Derbyshire	66.9
4. Honda	Swindon, Wiltshire	64.2
5. Ford	Valencia, Spain	55.6
6. Ford	Saarlouis, Germany	54.6
7. General Motors	Zaragoza, Spain	54.2
8. Peugeot	Mulhouse, France	51.7
9. Fiat	Melfi, Italy	50.0
10. Seat	Martorell, Spain	47.6



Cover version: The ITC rejected complaints from viewers about this advertisement for Impulse body spray showing a man having an erection

Two ads, one featuring an erection the other showing 'Fat Slags'. Which one got a rap over the knuckles?

Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

The television industry's watchdog has rejected complaints about an advertisement starring a man with an erection, but outlawed the use of the words "fat slags" in another.

The Independent Television Commission ruled that an advert for Impulse body spray, which uses a clock hand rising by a minute and a feather rising on hot air above a radiator to imply that the male model in a life drawing class is getting an erection, was acceptable innuendo that did not go beyond the bounds of good taste.

The advertisement was only aired after the 9.00pm watershed but 40 viewers complained that it was indecent and in bad taste to portray an erection in an advertisement. The ITC also rejected a several complaints from viewers who believed that the film was sexist because it would encourage people to laugh at men getting erections.

In the past when men couldn't help acting on Impulse they tended to buy flowers. In this advertisement the life model can't help himself when an art student wearing Impulse walks past him.

In the same complaints review published this week the ITC accepted the large number of complaints from people offended by Lucozade's television advertisement starring the cartoon *Viz* characters The Fat Slags. The advertisement provoked more than 300 people to complain to the ITC about the use of the words "O mercy it's the fat slags" in an advert and the negative way overweight women were portrayed.

Sandra and Tracey, the two scantily dressed large Geordies, who in *Viz* eat chips while having sex in alleyways, were seen in the commercial reacting with horror when they found a bottle of low calorie Lucozade in the refrigerator.

Many of the 309 complaints said that the advertisement had caused children to start using the phrase "fat slag" as an insult.

The worry about its adoption by children and the fact that the advertisement had received the largest number of complaints so far this year meant that broadcasters had already stopped it going out before 7.30pm and the advertiser had changed "fat slags" to "Sandra and Tracey".

The ITC ruled that the word "slag" was too strong to be used, but decided that the cartoon characters were unlikely to be offensive to most people.

But the words 'fat slag', which appeared in the Lucozade advert, were viewed to be offensive

Firm 'poured BSE waste down well'

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

The investigation into a rash of deaths in Kent from "new variant" Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (v-CJD) has led to allegations that the domestic water supply could have been contaminated.

A former building contractor who worked at Canterbury Mills, which rendered potentially BSE-infected cattle carcasses, said last night that liquid waste was poured down a well that supplies a public aquifer. The company strongly denied the claim.

Gary Skillet, the contractor, said workers at the mills had used a well to get rid of waste from cattle carcasses from the Government's culling programme, introduced last year. Speaking on Meridian TV's *Meridian Focus*, he said effluent was regularly pumped into the 15-metre well. This is linked to an aquifer that supplies domestic water to a large area of east Kent.

Mr Skillet, of Shadox, Kent, said: "Basically they put down the well whatever they could get down it," and added: "The well was at the lowest point on the site and anything in liquid form, be that rain or material from decomposing animals, would make its way into the well."

David Richardson, of Canterbury Mills, said: "We have never put anything down the well other than rainwater."

Of 25 v-CJD cases identified since 1994, five have occurred in Kent, most within about 25 miles of the plant. Scientists are increasingly convinced the disease is caused by exposure to BSE – though they are not sure what form the exposure might take.

Canterbury Mills rendering plant is based in Godmersham, north of Ashford, and has been operating since the First World War. The first case of BSE, or "mad cow disease", was identified in 1985 on a farm in Plurenden Manor Farm at High Halstead, about 25 miles from the plant. However, it is reckoned that thousands of cattle already had the disease and were entering the food supply at that time – and their remains would have gone to rendering plants.

> 'Basically they put down the well whatever they could get down it'

Scientists are divided on whether water could provide a medium for the BSE disease agent, which is thought to be a protein, and hence remarkably hardy. No tests have ever been carried out to search for it in water supplies, though.

Before the programme Mr Richardson said the allegations of disposal of waste down a well were "totally untrue" and added: "we are discussing the matter with our lawyers. We shall view the programme with interest.

"The fear that there is some infectious agent that may get into the water supply is basically skulduggery and scaremongery by people who do not want the factory here. The risk is absolutely minuscule."

The mother of v-CJD victim Matthew Parker has handed in a 5,500-signature petition to 10 Downing Street calling for a public inquiry into the BSE crisis on the day which would have been her son's 20th birthday.

Doreen Parker, from Doncaster, said too many questions had yet to be answered by scientists. Last week a coroner recorded a verdict of misadventure on the death in March of the 19-year-old trainee chef, saying he probably caught the fatal brain-wasting disease from eating food contaminated with "mad cow disease".

A Department of Health spokesman said the Government had no immediate plans to hold a public inquiry.

■ A catering company at the centre of an *E.coli* scare which has left 12 people ill was yesterday ordered by a court to shut down temporarily.

Magistrates in Birmingham granted an emergency prohibition order shutting Hanza Valley catering in Alum Rock Road, in the city's Saltley area.

Two children who were infected with *E.coli* following the outbreak, a boy and a girl aged four, were "stable" at Birmingham Children's Hospital yesterday.

Straw seeks report on bugging claims

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

The Home Secretary has demanded an urgent report from MI5 on allegations that MI5 bugged Peter Mandelson in the late 1970s.

Jack Straw is to meet the director of the security service, Stephen Lander, after a former MI5 officer claimed in a newspaper article that the organisation had tapped the Minister Without Portfolio's telephone for three years. David Shayler also said that Mr Straw himself had been regarded as a "Communist sympathiser" purely because he was president of the National Union of Students.

Other allegations made by Mr Shayler in the *Mail on Sunday* included claims that the service had kept a file on Harriet Harman, the Secretary of State for Social Security. He also said it planned to burgle the home of a *Guardian* journalist who was channelling Libyan funds to pay for a libel action against *The Independent*.

Last night a Home Office spokeswoman said the meeting between Mr Straw and Mr Lander was expected to take place "soon." She added: "The Home Secretary will be receiving a report from the director-general, Stephen Lander, over the issues raised at the weekend as soon as possible. Consideration is being given to what if any action should be taken."

The Home Office declined to go into details about the issues which would be covered in Mr Lander's report, or spell out what action it might be considering.

It is likely, however, that MI5 will at least be considering whether to ask the police to investigate whether Mr Shayler has committed an offence under the Official Secrets Act. Ultimately, it would be for the Attorney General, John Morris, to sanction any prosecution, should one be deemed appropriate.

Mr Straw is also likely to want to hear the security service's justification for carrying out surveillance on the targets identified by Mr Shayler.

Yesterday Mr Mandelson dismissed as "a pure smear" suggestions that MI5 took an interest in him because he had been a member of the Communist Party in the 1970s.

He said in a newspaper interview that he had for a brief spell attended meetings of the Young Communist League when he was an 18-year-old sixth-former in the early 1970s, but added: "I was never a member of the Communist Party. That is a pure smear."

The *Guardian* is asking Mr Lander for an explanation of Mr Shayler's allegation that MI5 tapped the home telephone of Victoria Brittain, the paper's deputy foreign editor, after large sums of money were deposited in her bank account. The transactions were innocent, the paper said.

Mr Shayler also recounted that MI5 kept files on John Lennon and "subversive" bands like the Sex Pistols and UB40.

The 31-year-old former officer has spoken to *The Independent* from an undisclosed location in Europe, and has said that he plans to stay on the run. He he believed he could not be extradited, but added: "I have to accept that I would be a fugitive. But no other country has a law like the Official Secrets Act so I don't think any court would allow me to be sent back to Britain."

His claims that the service carried out large numbers of arguably unnecessary bugging operations are bound to have infuriated his former colleagues. He also spoke of a culture of heavy drinking bureaucracy and low morale within MI5. It has also emerged that Mr Shayler had risked the wrath of the security service before he even joined it, when as the editor of a student newspaper he published banned extracts from *Spycatcher*, the banned memoirs of another former officer, Peter Wright.

Jack Straw: Plans to meet MI5's director-general 'soon'

£172m runway site 'destroyed' by protesters

Kate Watson-Smyth

Environmental protesters who set up camp near Manchester airport to try and prevent the building of the second runway have damaged the land beyond repair, council officials said yesterday.

Hundreds of trees, plants and animals are to be moved from the runway site before the construction of the £172m development, as part of an environmental package agreed by the airport authorities.

But Cheshire County Council said that two areas of the site have been destroyed by the protesters who were trying to prevent the runway. The airport campaign became a cause célèbre and newspapers made a national celebrity of a previously unknown environmentalist nicknamed "Swampy".

The protesters denied yesterday that there was any mess. Jeff Gazzard, a spokesman for the campaigners, said: "Of course any outdoor protest will cause some damage, but nothing like on the scale the council are talking about. This just sounds like an excuse for the airport not to carry out its commitments and save money.

He added: "If they can show me this damage then I will certainly go to the site and clear it up."

Derek Bateman, chairman of the council's environment committee, said the land was littered with rotting food, razor blades, barbed wire and cesspits.

"Obviously all the wildlife has gone and the land itself has been damaged by tunnels and booby traps. The protesters were totally irresponsible in the way they treated the land and it means that we will not be able to relocate the trees, plants or animals," he said.

"It seems strange that these were people who said they wanted to protect the land."

About 100 protesters set up seven camps on the runway site and lived there until they were evicted by the building contractors earlier this year.

The clean-up of the site in the Bollin Valley, Cheshire, will continue until next month and then the relocation of the trees and undergrowth will begin.

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هكذا من الاصل

Curb on paracetamol will save lives

Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

Controls are to be imposed on the sale of paracetamol and aspirin, two of the most widely used painkillers, to reduce the number of deaths caused by overdoses, ministers announced yesterday.

The measures are expected to prevent 3,000 overdoses and a dozen deaths a year, health officials said. Packs of the drugs sold in supermarkets and general stores are to be restricted to a maximum of 16 tablets or capsules. Larger packs containing up to 32 tablets will be available from pharmacies but shoppers are expected to be restricted to one apiece.

The aim of the restrictions is to reduce the number of pills left lying in medicine cabinets which are available to be seized and swallowed on impulse by those, especially teenagers, in despair. Between 30,000 and 40,000 people are admitted to hospital each year with paracetamol overdoses and 100 to 150 die. A key reason for the high number of admissions and deaths is thought to be the easy availability of the pills and ignorance about their dangers in overdose, although ministers accept that a determined suicide cannot be stopped. Paracetamol is one of the safest drugs at the recommended dose – two tablets every four to six hours, with a maximum of eight in any 24 hours – but an overdose of 20 to 30 may cause liver failure unless medical help is obtained rapidly. Victims have been known to swallow 60 to 70 tablets without throwing up but this is more likely if the pills are combined with alcohol. There are no early warning signs of an overdose until the victim collapses in a coma.

Life and death: the cold facts

- Overdoses account for one in ten of all admissions to hospital.
- Among 15- to 19-year-olds, one in 100 is admitted to hospital with an overdose every year.
- Not all those who attempt suicide mean to kill themselves. About 25 people attempt suicide for every one who succeeds; among the young the figure rises to 100 to one.
- More than eight out of ten suicide attempts are by women. Taking an overdose is their favoured method. But men succeed more often. They are four times as likely to take their own lives, and favour hanging and shooting.
- Choice of method is influenced by availability. Shooting is most common among farmers and landowners with access to guns. Doctors tend to choose poison.

Alan Milburn, health minister, said: "Analgesics are safe and effective when used at the recommended doses. But overdoses can have serious consequences. The toll of deaths from paracetamol overdoses calls for action to improve public safety."

Ministers also announced yesterday that terfenadine, a popular drug for hayfever, is to be formally removed from over-the-counter sale and made available only on prescription from 16 September because of evidence that it can cause heart problems. Since 1982, 37 people have suffered heart rhythm disorders associated with the drug and 15 have died.

Officials emphasised that it was safe when used correctly, but could be dangerous when taken with certain other drugs or grapefruit juice, which affected the way it was broken down by the body. Eleven popular anti-hay fever products contain the drug.

The controls on paracetamol and aspirin follow nine months' consultation and are to be introduced from September next year to give manufacturers time to prepare the new packaging, which will also carry clearer warnings about the risk of overdose.

Pharmacists will have discretion to supply up to 100 pills to customers suffering from chronic conditions such as arthritis but larger quantities will be available only on prescription. The same restrictions are being imposed on aspirin, which accounts for 5,000 hospital admissions a year and 60 deaths.

Rare view: Gustav Klimt's *Schloss Kammer am Attersee 11*, one of series of five on the subject, is the only one painted from the garden

Photograph: Tom Pilston

£6m view of a lake set to break price record

A 20th-century landscape painting is expected to realise more than £6m when it is sold at auction by Christie's this autumn.

Experts believe that *Schloss Kammer am Attersee II* by the Viennese artist Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) may prove to be the most expensive modern oil painting sold in Europe this decade.

Works by Klimt are rare at auction and the painting, the last of a small series of five landscapes in private hands, is thought to be one of his most significant works.

The view of Schloss Kammer was painted in 1909 while the artist was on holiday with his mistress Emilie Floge and her sisters, on the shores of Lake Attersee near Salzburg, Austria. Between 1908 and 1912, Klimt painted five views of the *schloss*, a romantic house set in lush gardens beside the Attersee.

The four other paintings from the celebrated series are housed in national museums in Vienna and Prague.

The picture, more than a metre square, is the only view of the *schloss* painted from the garden.

Jussi Pylkkanen, director of Modern and Impressionist pictures for Christie's in London, said: "Because the other four paintings in this series are now in museums it is an utmost rarity to see a work like this up for auction.

"It is from his most coveted series and the last picture of this series of five fetched £9m when it was sold in New York this May.

"We expect it to make over £6m and it is highly possible that it could even top the £7.5m mark, which would make it the most expensive oil sold in Europe this decade."

The landscape is part of Christie's fifth sale of German and Austrian art in London on 9 October.

Patents loophole could give rights over human genes

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

A loophole in a new Europe-wide biotechnology directive might allow companies to patent human genes, according to the UK Patent Office.

At stake is the multi-billion pound biotechnology industry, and future quality of health-care systems. If companies can patent the raw sequence of a gene, they can charge royalties from organisations which produce tests for the genes, and decide who is allowed to use the genes for scientific research. That will affect both patients and research.

Many of those who backed the new European Union directive, approved last month, thought it would only allow companies to patent a method of locating or testing for one of the 800,000-odd human genes – each an individual stretch of DNA. About 6,000 have been identified so far. But some people now realise that the eventual law could be more wide-ranging, allowing companies far more rights over genes – and hence what scientific work can be done with them – than was intended.

The possibility allowing for such "gene sequence" patenting, which would in effect give companies commercial control over the use of a naturally-occurring substance, is buried in a clause of the directive, which will be debated next month by patents specialists from EU member governments.

A specialist at the UK Patent Office told *The Independent*: "There is a clause which says that a gene 'may be patentable'. It's not entirely clear if that allows it or not."

Alastair Kent, head of the Genetic Interest Group (GIG), representing millions of people with genetic diseases, who lobbied in favour of the new directive, accepted yesterday that the loophole exists. "This is one of those issues where there's clearly a need for further work," he said yesterday. "It's one of those things which probably will have to wait for case law."

GIG, which has about 120 member organisations including Mencap, the Huntingdon's Disease Association, the Cancer Research Campaign and the Muscular Dystrophy Group, lobbied strongly in favour of the new directive, which MEPs approved in its first reading last month.

When a similar directive came before the European Parliament in 1995, GIG – also headed then by Mr Kent – opposed it on the basis that it might allow gene sequence patenting.

Meaty matter: A Belgian Blue bull which carries the natural genetic mutation

Photograph: Farmers Weekly

Mutant adds muscle to farm animals

A natural genetic mutation that creates hugely-muscled cattle could be used to breed meatier pigs, sheep and chickens on the farms of the future, writes **Charles Arthur**.

Animals with a double dose of the mutant gene have 20 per cent more muscle and less fat. But they also grow so large in the womb that the calves sometimes cannot be born normally, often requiring surgery. The gene is found in a number of cattle breeds, including the Belgian Blue amd Charolais.

Now teams in the US and the Antipodes are investigating whether the same genes occur naturally in other farmyard animals, and whether transgenic animals incorporating the genes could be created to raise weightier animals, raising farm yields.

The discovery arose from work investigating muscle-wasting diseases such as muscular dystrophy. A team at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland found that removing a gene called GDF8 – for Growth Differentiation Factor 8 – from mice caused them to have huge muscles.

Researchers at the US Agricultural Research Service in Nebraska, together with scientists at the Ruakura Research Institute in New Zealand, then began searching for GDF8 – also known as myostatin – in cattle breeds such as the Belgian Blue, which is found in the US and Australia as well as Belgium.

"The mutation exists in several breeds," said Dr Tim Smith, whose work is reported in the latest edition of the US publication *Genome Research*. "They have to have a double copy of the gene to be heavily muscled. If they only have one then they're just a bit heavier but there aren't the associated birth problems." Cattle breeders would like to be able to test for it so they could eliminate the double copy.

Exactly what function the GDF8 protein performs is unclear. "It's a growth factor signalling protein which seems to bond to the surface of muscle molecules, and tells them to stop making fibres," said Dr Smith. "It's a negative molecule – telling the cells to stop. The loss of that control leads to increased muscle fibre."

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news

Private schools 'key to morality'

Head of prep schools body accuses ministers of intellectual fascism

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Ministers must beware that their single-minded drive for higher standards does not turn into "intellectual fascism", a leading prep school headmaster said yesterday.

Dr Bob Acheson, chairman of the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools, told the association's annual conference in Harrogate that he welcomed the Government's promise of partnership with independent schools but was worried by some of its language.

"The word crusade conjures up pictures of intolerance of might being right, of myopic single-mindedness. Such single-mindedness runs the risk of becoming intellectual fascism and this sits uncomfortably with a truly liberal democracy. Education, education, education may be the starting point but history shows that such ideals all too often descend into regulation, regulation, regulation.

"There is a real risk that, buoyed up by a massive Parliamentary majority, this idealistic and fresh Government will, as it stumbles upon the uncomfortable and complicated realities of government, stop speaking to the people and start speaking for the people." Dr Acheson, head of Clifton College preparatory school in Bristol, said ministers should learn from independent schools' success in upholding moral values. Parents chose private schooling for their children not to buy social privilege or academic success but because they instilled discipline and morality.

Teacher unions immediately attacked the implication that fee-paying schools were more successful than state schools at inculcating values.

Dr Acheson said that, while the barbarians of immorality were knocking at society's door, independence was the key to private schools' moral confidence. "It allows us to create the kind of society and the kind of community which will preserve all that is good and worthy in our culture. It affords us the chance to lift the eyes of children from the gutter of the 20th century and to help them to aspire to the stars." He accepted that independent schools had no monopoly in this territory.

He bemoaned the decline of morality in a society in which respect for the Church, the police, Parliament and the Royal Family had all collapsed.

"How do we counter magazines being read by 10-year-olds with such eye-catching title pages as 'Will sex keep you together?' ... How do we counter the influence of computer games which allow you to shoot children in a school playground or dismember your opponents with a power saw?" At least one child in his school had talked openly of seeing uncut versions of *Basic Instinct* and *Pulp Fiction*. The collapse of parenting had been another frightening feature of the last 30 years. He attacked the "pick and mix" independent school parents who subscribed to schools' moral values until they got in the way of their own convenience.

Schools could never make up for the collapse of family life. "How often does your blood boil when separating parents tell you in the cosy privacy of your study that they are about to split up but this won't, of course, affect the children."

Independent schools' future lay in "keeping the torch of moral firmness burning brightly as a new dark age threatens to engulf us." Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said: "It is not the sole prerogative of independent schools to promote moral standards. That is what every teacher in every school tries to achieve."

Leading article, page 13

Upper crust: Pupils of yesteryear celebrating end of term at Ardingly College, Haywards Heath, a type of school held to instil discipline and morality Photograph: Hulton Getty

Green spies end up with red faces

Kim Sengupta

Security operatives spied on Greenpeace, believing the environmentalists were building a secret miniature submarine for operations in the oilfields of the north Atlantic. In fact, they were building a floating tent.

A surveillance operation was set up, it was alleged, in Suffolk, where the company constructing the craft was based, and at Greenpeace's workshop in London. State-of-the-art equipment was used, and operatives reported that something sinister was taking shape. A picture of the project began to emerge: it was cylindrical and yellow. Could it possibly be ... a yellow submarine?

In fact it was a solar-powered survival capsule, equipped to carry a crew of three. It is immobile but can be airlifted on to land or sea. It is easy to understand how the mistake was made: even Greenpeace admits the "bright yellow cylindrical-shaped capsule looks like a submarine with no conning tower".

Less easy to fathom was who carried out the surveillance which led to the mistake. Scotland Yard's Special Branch says it has no knowledge of the operation. But a source said: "It wasn't us; I believe it was another agency, and the job may have been contracted out to private investigators."

A former police officer now in private investigations maintained: "There was an operation on around last March. Obviously certain parties were concerned about what exactly was being produced, and it was natural to carry out checks. I have been told that a government agency was involved."

Chris Rose, Greenpeace's campaign director, said: "We are regularly put under surveillance by a variety of public and private bodies. The capsule was built in March-April, and at the time we were told by very highly placed sources that the then Tory government and elements in the oil industry were convinced that we would do something spectacular to put the environment on the election agenda, and this could help the opposition parties."

The capsule was used by Greenpeace in July to "seize" the island of Rockall as part of the campaign to stop Atlantic oil exploration. It was also used in its "occupation" of the Stena Dee oil platform this month. BP, which had been involved in litigation with Greenpeace over Stena Dee, denied it had carried out the surveillance during the construction of the pod.

Mother criticises abuse inquiry as inadequate

Louise Jury

A mother who first raised the alarm 15 years ago over the abuse of mentally disabled adults yesterday criticised plans for an independent inquiry as inadequate.

Buckinghamshire County Council has bowed to government pressure to set up an independent inquiry into physical and sexual abuse at two homes run by a company called Longcare at Stoke Poges.

Gordon Rowe, the homes' owner, committed suicide before he could face charges, but his wife Angela was jailed for two-and-a-half years this year for ill treating and neglecting residents.

But Norma Adams, 74, said the terms for the Buckinghamshire inquiry into the Longcare abuse case were too limited. The council wants to examine its current policies for the mentally disabled and the years 1993 and 1994, when abuse claims were finally acted upon. But Mrs Adams has backed families who believe a catalogue of abuse in the previous decade should be investigated.

Fears were first raised about Gordon Rowe when he worked between 1980 and 1983 at a home in Somerset attended by Mrs Adams's son, Greg, now 32.

Mrs Adams did not know Rowe was the perpetrator but she reported general concerns to Somerset social services, police and the mental health charity Mencap, who all investigated. Other more specific claims were made by other people.

But no charges were brought and Buckinghamshire County Council said there was not enough evidence to stop it granting Rowe a licence to open his own home. "You've no idea about the burden of guilt I carry about that," Mrs Adams said. "That's something I'm going to have to learn to live with. But a lot of other people with more clout than I have should have done a lot more. I thought it was being sorted out."

Mrs Adams, of Stratford, east London, contacted the families of the abuse victims to tell them of her early warnings to the authorities after she heard about the trial in May of Angela Rowe and two other care workers.

She had entertained no suspicions about Gordon Rowe when she first met him at the Somerset home. But she was alarmed at stories of sexual misbehaviour and lax standards at the home. She knows at least one other woman also reported her observations to a local authority with residents at the home.

Still not suspicious of Rowe, Mrs Adams later considered sending her son to one of his Longcare homes. But official files show that the Somerset home's management said they would fight the move "tooth and nail". Mrs Adams now understands this was because of the allegations against Rowe, but she was not told this at the time.

Mrs Adams said: "If the conclusion of the investigations was inconclusive, Rowe shouldn't have had registration because 'inconclusive' doesn't clear him. It isn't good enough."

June Raybaud, of the Justice for Longcare Survivors campaign, said the inquiry must examine the 1983 decision that Gordon Rowe was a fit person to be registered to run a home. "There are many question marks hanging over that decision."

A spokeswoman for Buckinghamshire County Council said terms of reference were being discussed with the Department of Health, based on what Paul Boateng, the health minister, had requested. The council expects to announce shortly who will hold the inquiry, when it will take place and the final terms of reference.

DAILY POEM

At St Hilary

By Charles Causley

Between two Cornish seas, the spire,
Blazes the land, the waving air.

The dark stem of a Celtic cross
Sprouts, half-grown, from the shallow grass.

A tomb, exploded, shows the bones
Of a young sycamore. Slant stones

Cram the graveyard like ships stormbound.
A wasted urn drips shard and sand.

Like auguries, two seabirds lie
Motionless in the squalling sky.

Through rain and wind and risen snow
I come, as fifty years ago.

Drawn by I know not what, to sound
A fabled shore, unlost, unfound,

Where in the shadow of the sun
Past, present, future, wait as one.

Only the breathing ash speaks true.
Nothing is new. Nothing is new

As the sea slinks to where I stand
Between the water and the land.

This week's Daily Poems celebrate the 80th birthday of the Cornish poet Charles Causley. His *Collected Poems 1941-1997* are published by Macmillan (£20) and *Selected Poems for Children* by Macmillan Children's Books (£5.99).

IMPORTANT NEWS FOR BORROWERS

The rates of interest for new and existing mortgage customers (in appropriate cases the basic rate) will increase by 0.25% with effect from 1st September 1997. The Society's standard variable base rate will become 8.1%. The new rates continue to reflect the Society's commitment to mutuality and the benefits this brings to its customers.

Fixed rate mortgages will not be affected during the contractual fixed rate period. In cases where mortgage interest rate changes are subject to notice, the increase will take place after the appropriate notice period which will commence on 1st September 1997.

There will be no change to the interest rates for existing Secured Personal Loans regulated by the Consumer Credit Act 1974.

For customers participating in the Society's annual review procedure, this interest rate increase will be taken into account when calculating new monthly payments with effect from April 1998 or, in appropriate cases, the anniversary of the mortgage.

New Rates for Savers

With effect from 1st September 1997.

Type of Account	Gross % p.a.	Net % p.a.
SPECIAL 85		
85 days' notice		
£100,000 and over	6.70	5.36
C.A.R. †	6.93	5.49
£50,000 to £99,999	6.32	5.05
C.A.R. †	6.50	5.17
£25,000 to £49,999	5.99	4.79
C.A.R. †	6.15	4.89
£10,000 to £24,999	5.70	4.56
C.A.R. †	5.85	4.65
£5,000 to £9,999	5.23	4.18
C.A.R. †	5.35	4.26
£2,500 to £4,999	4.75	3.80
C.A.R. †	4.85	3.86
TESSA SELECT	7.45	-
TESSA ELITE (DEPOSIT*)		
TESSA ELITE (SHARE*)	7.10	-
TESSA ELITE INTEREST ACCOUNT	5.60	4.48
TESSA ELITE II	7.45	-
POSTMASTER II		
Easy access by post		
£100,000 and over	7.00	5.60
£60,000 to £99,999	6.90	5.52
£30,000 to £59,999	6.80	5.44
£10,000 to £29,999	6.40	5.12
£5,000 to £9,999	5.95	4.76
£2,500 to £4,999	5.60	4.48
POSTMASTER* ONLY		
Rates reflect those shown above for PostMaster II except		
£1,000 to £4,999	5.60	4.48
POSTAL 10 (2nd Issue)		
10 days' notice		
£100,000 and over	7.15	5.72
£60,000 to £99,999	7.05	5.64
£30,000 to £59,999	6.90	5.52
£10,000 to £29,999	6.70	5.36
£5,000 to £9,999	6.45	5.16
£2,500 to £4,999	5.95	4.76
POSTAL 10* ONLY		
Rates reflect those shown above for Postal 10 (2nd Issue) except		
£1,000 to £4,999	5.95	4.76
OFFSHORE SAVINGS ACCOUNT		
Operated by post through our Gibraltar office		
£100,000 and over	6.65	5.32
£60,000 to £99,999	6.40	5.12
£30,000 to £59,999	6.15	4.92
£10,000 to £29,999	5.90	4.72
PRESTIGE 30 (Issue 2)		
30 days' of notice		
£100,000 and over	6.25	5.00
£50,000 to £99,999	5.95	4.76
£25,000 to £49,999	5.65	4.52
£10,000 to £24,999	5.40	4.32
£5,000 to £9,999	4.70	3.76
£2,500 to £4,999	4.45	3.56
PRESTIGE 30* (Issue 1)		
Rates reflect those shown above for Prestige 30 (Issue 2) except		
£500 to £2,499	2.50	2.00
MONTHLY INCOME ACCOUNT		
7 days' notice.		
Rate includes 0.5% bonus		
£100,000 and over	7.25	5.80
£50,000 to £99,999	6.75	5.40
£25,000 to £49,999	6.50	5.20
£10,000 to £24,999	6.25	5.00
HIGH RISE (DEPOSIT) AND HIGH RISE (SHARE*)		
Easy access		
£100,000 and over	5.85	4.68
£50,000 to £99,999	5.35	4.28
£25,000 to £49,999	4.60	3.68
£10,000 to £24,999	3.50	2.80
£5,000 to £9,999	3.05	2.44
£2,500 to £4,999	2.60	2.08
£500 to £2,499	2.15	1.72
£100 to £499	2.00	1.60

Type of Account	Gross % p.a.	Net % p.a.
CANARY ACCOUNT		
Easy access		
£100,000 and over	6.75	5.40
£50,000 to £99,999	6.25	5.00
£25,000 to £49,999	5.50	4.40
£10,000 to £24,999	5.40	4.32
£5,000 to £9,999	5.00	4.00
£2,500 to £4,999	4.75	3.80
£500 to £2,499	4.25	3.40
Up to £499	3.25	2.60
HEADSTART (DEPOSIT) AND HEADSTART SAVINGS BOND*		
Easy access		
£25,000 and over	7.50	6.00
£10,000 to £24,999	6.80	5.44
£5,000 to £9,999	6.55	5.24
£250 to £4,999	6.30	5.04
INVESTMENT SHARE*		
Easy access		
The bonus interest rates equivalent to those offered on the corresponding tiers of HIGH RISE for balances over £500 will be revised in accordance with the HIGH RISE rates shown opposite.		
CLIENTS' RESERVE		
Easy access		
£100,000 and over	5.60	4.48
£50,000 to £99,999	5.40	4.32
£25,000 to £49,999	4.40	3.52
£10,000 to £24,999	3.40	2.72
£5,000 to £9,999	2.90	2.32
£2,500 to £4,999	2.40	1.92
£500 to £2,499	2.15	1.72
£100 to £499	1.90	1.52
BUSINESS EXTRA		
Easy access		
£100,000 and over	5.60	4.48
£50,000 to £99,999	5.40	4.32
£25,000 to £49,999	4.40	3.52
£10,000 to £24,999	3.40	2.72
£5,000 to £9,999	2.90	2.32
£2,500 to £4,999	2.40	1.92
£500 to £2,499	2.15	1.72
£100 to £499	1.90	1.52
CHARITY ACCOUNT		
Easy access		
£100,000 and over	5.60	4.48
£50,000 to £99,999	5.40	4.32
£25,000 to £49,999	4.40	3.52
£10,000 to £24,999	3.40	2.72
£5,000 to £9,999	2.90	2.32
£2,500 to £4,999	2.40	1.92
£500 to £2,499	2.15	1.72
£100 to £499	1.90	1.52
SUPER SAVER (DEPOSIT)/SUPER SAVER (SHARE*) (rate includes bonus)		
Easy access		
£10,000 and over	7.50	6.00
£5,000 to £9,999	6.95	5.56
£1,000 to £4,999	5.70	4.56
£20 to £999		
SPECIAL 50*		
£5,000 and over	4.70	3.76
TWO CITIES*		
£500 and over	4.05	3.24
PERSONAL DEPOSITS	3.00	2.40
INVESTMENT PLUS		
£2,500 and over	6.40	5.12
AVC*	6.10	-
GROSS NON-RESIDENT*		
£10,000 and over	3.35	-
£5,000 to £9,999	2.95	-
£2,000 to £4,999	2.45	-
£50 to £1,999	2.35	-

The interest rates on all other accounts will remain unchanged. Interest will be paid gross to non-taxpayers subject to eligibility and the required registration. Otherwise interest will be paid after the deduction of income tax at the appropriate rate, currently 20%.

*These are closed issue accounts.

†Gross Compounded Annual Rate where the interest is re-invested in the account monthly.

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HALIFAX PREMIUM INTERNATIONAL		
£100,000+	7.45%	7.21%
£50,000+	7.40%	7.16%
£25,000+	7.15%	6.93%
HALIFAX DEPOSIT INTERNATIONAL		
£100,000+	7.10%	6.88%
£50,000+	6.90%	6.69%
£25,000+	6.75%	6.55%
£10,000+	6.30%	6.13%
£5,000+	5.50%	5.37%

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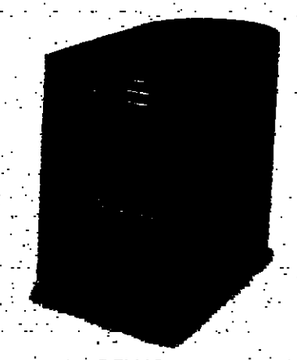

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significant reports

Plavsic wrestles for control of generals

Bosnian Serb President Biljana Plavsic tried to assert her control over the fractious army yesterday. The Western-backed Ms Plavsic, in a fight to the finish with hardline loyalists of indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic, summoned the generals who last week disputed her authority to an afternoon meeting at her Banja Luka headquarters. A majority of the 11 general staff members attended, accounting for two thirds of the army, but chief of staff General Pero Colic stayed away. **Reuters – Banja Luka**

N Korean defectors 'in US'

North Korea's ambassador to Egypt has defected and been granted asylum in the United States, possibly bringing valuable information about his country's missile sales to Iran and Syria. The US State Department, announcing the defection yesterday of Chung Song Gil, called it "the highest ranking case" of a North Korean defector to the US. In a co-ordinated move, the diplomat's brother, Chang Hung So, defected from a North Korean trade mission in France and also was given asylum along with the ambassador's wife. **AP – Washington**

Krenz fights sentence

Egon Krenz, East Germany's last hardline communist leader, lodged an appeal against his manslaughter conviction for the deaths of refugees killed in the 1980s as they tried to flee over the Berlin Wall. A Berlin court on Monday sentenced Krenz to six and a half years in prison. He denounced the trial as "victors' justice" and vowed to fight the ruling in the European Court of Justice. **Reuters – Berlin**

King returns to Cambodia

Cambodia's King Norodom Sihanouk returns from China to his troubled homeland this week for the first time since Second Prime Minister Hun Sen overthrew the king's son, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, in a bloody takeover last month. The king has said the trip is a spiritual one. He will take part in Buddhist prayer ceremonies in the north-western town of Siem Reap, home of the Angkor temple complex. **Reuters – Phnom Penh**

More trouble for 'Mir'

The crew of Russia's ailing space station *Mir* fixed their oxygen generating systems yesterday after a brief time without fresh air, but hit another snag trying to aim the solar panels they repaired last week, officials said. **Reuters – Moscow**

Georgia to sue tobacco firms

Following Florida's $11bn (£6.8bn) settlement with tobacco companies on Monday, Georgia's Governor, Zell Miller, said his state will file its own lawsuit against the tobacco companies by the end of the week. **AP–Atlanta**

Business Comment, Page 17

Zionists mark anniversary

Around 1,700 delegates began gathering in Basle, Switzerland to mark the 100th anniversary of a historic meeting that launched Zionists' modern drive to create a Jewish state. Hundreds of soldiers and police cordoned off the conference centre to deter any terrorist violence or anti-Semitic demonstrations by right-wing radicals. **Reuters – Basle**

Montserrat crisis: Island leaders call for package to help people remain on island

Jamaica attacks British 'disaster'

Phil Davison
St John's, Antigua

The Jamaican Prime Minister, PJ Patterson, yesterday joined Montserrat's Chief Minister David Brandt in slamming Britain for what they said was a slow response to Montserrat's volcano disaster.

Chairing a meeting of the Caribbean Community (Caricom) in Antigua, Mr Patterson said: "Let us hope this will be part of a learning curve on how not to respond to disasters. I would hope that their [the British government's] response in the future will be more substantial and immediate than over the past two years."

Despite statements in London that Clare Short had not been sidelined, the decision to create a new decision-making group was widely interpreted as such in the Caribbean, and welcomed.

When British reporters broke the news to Mr Brandt on Monday, he smiled broadly and said: "That's very good news. With that news, I am much more optimistic about the future rebuilding of our island.

"When I was in London recently, I found Mr [Robin] Cook and Baroness Symons [the Foreign Office minister responsible for the Caribbean] quite caring and understanding. When Baroness Symons came to Montserrat, she was so touched by the conditions at the hospital that she got money committed immediately. Ms Short stopped that," he claimed.

Both Mr Patterson and Mr Brandt attacked a British government's "voluntary repatriation package" which offers cash to Montserratians who opt to move to other Caribbean islands. They described it as an inducement for the remaining 4,000 or so islanders to leave despite the fact that the northern part of the island was believed to be safe and could be developed.

Both suggested Britain offer a package to those who opt to stay, to help them rebuild their lives. "Giving a package to those who leave is inducing them to leave," said Mr Brandt, a lawyer and legislator named by Governor Frank Savage last week. "They should give a package to those who stay. They [the British government] are creating a condition of misery so that people would want to choose between misery and the unknown."

Mr Patterson said: "There is no justification at all for a total evacuation of the island. It seems to me that the case for a restoration of the island is compelling indeed. It is a matter that lies primarily with the United Kingdom."

Only a trickle of people on Montserrat have taken up the offer to leave, with many waiting to see whether Britain will make good its pledge to make infrastructure developments in the unaffected north of the island, including the building of 250 homes.

■ The international development minister, George Foulkes, will visit Montserrat this weekend, it was confirmed last night. The trip had been in doubt after the island's chief minister suggested he might not be welcome. However, a decision that he should go after all was taken after David Brandt softened his stance and said that he would be glad to see any English minister on the island. The MP Bernie Grant is also to visit the island.

Building for the future: Residents on Montserrat carry out repairs despite calls for a full evacuation Photograph: AFP

Cook discounts Short snub

Fran Abrams and Andrew Marshall

The Government took action yesterday to quash the idea that Clare Short had been sidelined in the handling of the Montserrat crisis. Asked if she felt "snubbed" by the setting up of a new cross-departmental committee on the island's problems, Ms Short replied: "No, I don't."

Downing Street had already rejected suggestions that the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, had in effect taken charge of the Montserrat crisis. However, it was Mr Cook who made a statement after the meeting of the interdepartmental Montserrat Action Group – in which he, too, denied any move to downgrade Ms Short's role.

"I and other Cabinet colleagues fully support the plan put together by my colleague Clare Short to ensure that the people of Montserrat have choices," he said.

The real mystery is why the Montserrat Action Group has only just been created; and why Ms Short had apparently taken the lead on a policy issue which falls mainly within the remit of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, not her Department of International Development. The Government's shoddy handling of the Montserrat crisis hinges on poor co-ordination, poor communications and lack of understanding of the issues involved, according to diplomats and Caribbean sources in London.

Far from blaming Ms Short, most point to a failure in the government machinery as a whole. The episode points to a lack of experience in foreign affairs among the new Cabinet, they say. It has alarmed other Dependent Territories, since until yesterday nobody had taken effective charge. "God knows what would happen if there were another Falklands crisis," said one.

The Dependent Territories, scattered in Europe, the Caribbean, the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and Pacific, are what remains of the British Empire. None can be or wants to be independent. They are ruled by a British-appointed governor, in tandem with a locally-chosen government. The Foreign Office has the lead responsibility for the DTs, and Baroness Symons is the minister in charge of those in the Caribbean. She is on holiday.

Ms Short, as Secretary of State for International Development, became involved only because of the island's need for emergency aid, which falls under her department. It is uncertain why she was allowed by the Whitehall apparatus to become the *de facto* lead minister on the issue.

However, poor communication was only one aspect of the crisis. Co-ordination between the different departments also seems to have been very weak.

There is a Royal Navy destroyer off the coast of the island: **some Montserratians have come to Britain, and emergency changes have been made to rules regarding social security payments and work permits. And, of course, money is involved. So co-ordination has been required between the FCO, Ministry of Defence, Treasury, Home Office and Department of Social Security. So far this has taken place on an *ad hoc* basis, and seems to have been inadequate.**

Until this Government took office, the Department for International Development was called the Overseas Development Agency, and was part of the Foreign Office. It was headed by a Foreign Office minister. Now that it is separate, co-ordination between the FCO and ODA seems to have deteriorated.

The lack of co-ordination from the new government seems to reflect its lack of focus on or experience of foreign policy issues; and its lack of historical memory.

Chaos looms as Kenya clings to democracy

James Roberts
Nairobi

It is election time in Kenya but the political talk is not about votes. It is about revolution. After pulling the ruling Kanu party out of planned talks on constitutional reform with the main opposition grouping, the National Convention Assembly, on Monday, Vice-President George Saitoti claimed the NCA was engaged in the "evil mission of changing the government of Kenya by revolution". It was an unlawful lobby group bent on undermining parliamentary democracy by causing chaos and civil war. Kanu would be betraying Kenya if it entered into dialogue with the NCA.

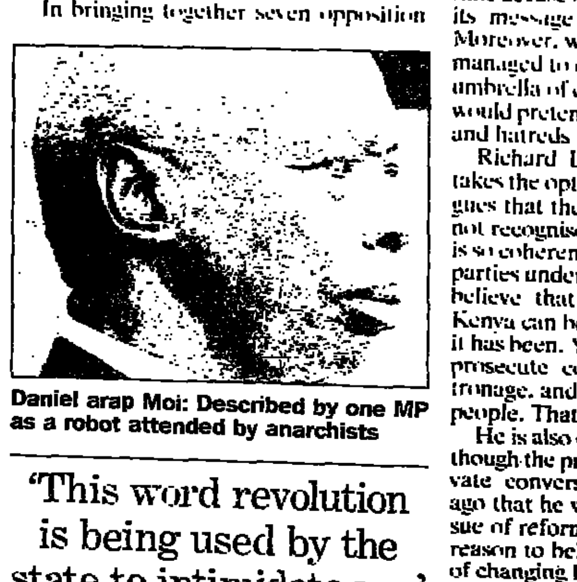
The implication was clear. The government would be justified in bringing down the full force of the state on those attempting to destroy the state. Yesterday, at the first full session of the NCA since it met in April to draw up its pro-democracy agenda, James Osengo, deputy leader of the Ford-Kenya party, met the veiled threat head-on. "Don't fear this word revolution. It is being used by the state to intimidate you."

His message to President Daniel arap Moi was hardly calculated to encourage the government to engage in dialogue. "If Moi does not listen we have to declare sovereignty of this assembly and move forward. We don't want to talk about government in exile but government here."

Such language is not simply a Kenyan form of political theatre. A real threat of chaos and national disintegration hangs over the country. Violence around the main coastal city and holiday centre of Mombasa has claimed 40 lives since it began two weeks ago, the latest on Sunday night, when 30 raiders stormed a bar in the Mombasa suburb of Likuni. They killed the owner, Samuel Kamau, and seriously injured his son and another man. Kamau was once an aide to Kenya's first president, Jomo Kenyatta. Nine people died in July in brutally repressed demonstrations in Nairobi, in the early days of a programme of mass action which the NCA is now planning to step up.

The NCA was not constituted to push for power, but as a forum to campaign for democracy and constitutional reform. It sees the 1992 multi-party elections (in which Mr Moi easily defeated a divided opposition in an atmosphere of violence and intimidation) as undemocratic. Only reform of the pro-government media and laws that suppress the normal political process and hold a veil of secrecy over official corruption, will allow free and fair elections.

In bringing together seven opposition parties with non-political elements such as religious organisations, lawyers and NGOs, it claims to reflect the spectrum of a civil society. "We are the only group that is going to save this country," said Charity Ngilu, a likely presidential candidate, yesterday.



Daniel arap Moi: Described by one MP as a robot attended by anarchists

> 'This word revolution is being used by the state to intimidate you'

Until last weekend, it was possible to hope that this road to salvation might be through discussion. "Dialogue is the only sane route," said Kivutha Kibwana, a senior NRA figure. But Gibson Kamau Kuria, lawyer and main mover behind the NRA, yesterday spoke for many when he said that only mass action would now bring Kanu to dialogue. As the language of persuasion gave way to threats and sabre rattling, Mr Moi was described by one MP as a robot, many of those around him as anarchists, and the whole ruling clique as a "fraternity of dictatorship".

How deep and broad the NRA support really is, is open to question. It claims to speak for all social sectors, but at the same time accuses Kanu of preventing it getting its message across to the grass roots. Moreover, while rivals and enemies have managed to come together under the one umbrella of constitutional reform, no one would pretend there are not bitter rivalries and hatreds under the surface.

Richard Leakey, Safina party leader, takes the optimistic view on all this. He argues that the reason the government will not recognise the NCA is precisely that it is so coherent. "It is united and has all the parties under its control," he says. "We all believe that with constitutional reform Kenya can be ruled more cohesively than it has been. You can build in provisions to prosecute corruption, to eliminate patronage, and for a coalition that will bind people. That's what it's all about."

He is also optimistic about Mr Moi. Although the president vowed to him in a private conversation two-and-a-half years ago that he would never waver on the issue of reform, Mr Leakey claims to have reason to believe that Mr Moi is capable of changing his mind.

But his Safina colleague Paul Muite spoke of mass action being the last chance to avert civil war, chiming in with the view expressed most vigorously yesterday that the "fact of dictatorship" in Kenya should now be accepted and the NCA should plan accordingly. There was at least one alternative voice at yesterday's gathering. Professor Karanja Njoroge is a Kanu supporter but also an advocate of constitutional reform. "What Kenya needs is tolerance," he told me. "Without tolerance there will be no democracy, no constitution, no reform. Even our greatest political enemies we must tolerate." But Mr Njoroge did not get the opportunity to present his views from the platform.

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Apartheid's last leader quits his sinking party

Mary Braid
Johannesburg

F W de Klerk , South Africa's last white president, resigned yesterday as leader of the National Party, amid predictions that his political demise was one more nail in the coffin of his beleaguered party.

Mr de Klerk said that his decision to quit the NP, the Afrikaner-dominated party which enforced apartheid during a four-decade rule, was a sacrifice for the party's future.

He said the "unjustified perception" that the NP was still linked to a guilt-ridden past was obstructing political realignment in the country. "The last remaining high-profile link with the old NP and its so-called baggage withdraws himself from the active party-political scene," said Mr de Klerk yesterday in Cape Town.

His withdrawal may prove a useless gesture. For even if the political reinvention was possible - and that is very doubtful - Mr de Klerk is leaving a party at war with itself; ripped apart by conservative die-hards who argue too much of Afrikanerdom has already been conceded in the negotiated transition to black majority rule and reformers who insist the NP must transform itself into a black-led, multi-racial mass movement to survive.

Yesterday Mr de Klerk claimed there had been no internal pressure on him to resign.

But for months, the man who stunned the world in 1990 by unbanning the ANC, releasing Nelson Mandela and entering into negotiations to end white minority rule, has struggled to create a viable opposition to the ANC, all the time torn between his left and right wings.

In the end he failed to please either. Yesterday the right-wingers were the most vocal. General Constand Viljoen, of the right-wing Freedom Front, said Mr de Klerk 's departure was a positive development in Afrikaner politics, while a Boerestaat Party spokesman said Mr de Klerk's "treachery towards his people was unequalled." The past eight months have been particularly tough for Mr de Klerk . The extent of right-wing discontent became evident earlier this year when *Die Burger*, a conservative Afrikaans newspaper, launched an unprecedented attack on Mr de Klerk 's leadership. It appears to have weakened Mr de Klerk 's support for the party's reformers.

Three months ago Roelf Meyer, a reformer who won acclaim as the NP's chief negotiator during the peace talks, resigned to start a new political movement.

Mr Meyer left after the NP reform think-tank he headed was axed under pressure from the right. A haemorrhage of reformist NP members has followed and Mr Meyer's new party will be launched next month.

Since Mr Meyer's departure the NP's fortunes have continued to decline. Mr de Klerk's resignation comes a week after a new survey showed NP support has slumped to 12 per cent, compared to 21 per cent in the 1994 elections.

White desertion of the political process is largely responsible. Research also suggests the party has actually lost the little black support it had.

Only in the Western Cape, dominated by NP-supporting Coloured (mixed-race) voters, does the NP have political control; leading to predictions that it will soon become just a regional force, holed up in the only province it controls.

"The NP is a sinking ship," said Theo Bekker, political science lecturer at Pretoria University. He argues there is no one to take Mr de Klerk 's place.

Neither front-runner - Marthinus van Schalwyk, one of the reformers who remain, and Hernus Kriel, Western Cape premier and darling of the right - have the stature necessary to prevent further splintering.

Yesterday political commentators said Mr de Klerk, 61, should have got out while his reputation was intact. For the last year has been as damaging to him as his party.

Mr de Klerk undoubtedly deserved the international acclaim - and the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize he shared with President Nelson Mandela - for his dramatic decision to enter into negotiations with the ANC.

It went against everything he, as a member of the elite Afrikaner conservative establishment, seemed to stand for and came just a year after he ousted the ailing PW Botha from power. But recent concessions to his right wing have sullied his reformist credentials.

And his reputation has been further damaged by the apartheid-era atrocities exposed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the independent body charged with exposing the truth about South Africa's past.

In May Mr de Klerk 's failure to disclose all he is assumed to know about the NP's sins to a special TRC hearing - and his refusal to accept responsibility on behalf of his party for apartheid-era human-rights abuses - almost reduced Archbishop Desmond Tutu, TRC chairman, to tears.

His performance also won him almost universal criticism in the international and national press. One newspaper described Mr de Klerk as SA's very own Rip Van Winkle; a political leader who chaired the country's Security Council but somehow managed to sleep through all the violence it sanctioned.

The debate about just what Mr de Klerk will be remembered for will rage for years. But yesterday some, at least, were generous.

Stanley Magoba, leader of the Pan Africanist Congress, said Mr de Klerk had at least been an NP leader willing to listen. "I used to see him as a living example of dialogue, as opposed to PW Botha's monologue."

President Mandela's regard for Mr de Klerk has apparently plummeted since 1994.

But yesterday he said that, personal shortcomings apart, South Africa should not forget Mr de Klerk 's contribution in smoothing the transition from "our painful past."

Tony Leon, of the Democratic Party, went further. "Mr de Klerk will be much better judged by history than by his critics and opponents now," he said.

Peace-prize winners Mandela and de Klerk Photograph: AP

> His reputation has been further damaged by the atrocities exposed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission ... one newspaper described Mr de Klerk as SA's very own Rip Van Winkle, who chaired the Security Council but slept through all the violence

Yesterday's man: Mr de Klerk announcing that he was relinquishing leadership of the National Party and quitting politics Photograph: Reuters

Australia to forge railway across outback's dead heart

Robert Milliken
Sydney

It has been talked about and fought about for more than a century. Now, at last, one of the great railway pipe dreams of modern times may be about to happen.

The railway line in question is planned to run through some of the world's most remote, barren and inhospitable land, from Alice Springs to Darwin, almost 1,500km across the "dead heart" of Australia's outback.

From tomorrow, the Australian government will call for expressions of interest from international companies to build, own and operate this railway that has been part of Australian folklore since it was first proposed in the 1870s.

This follows an announcement by John Howard, the Australian Prime Minister, that the federal coalition government would spend A$100m (£47m) on building the railway between the two outback towns. The governments of South Australia and the Northern Territory have each committed A$100m, leaving most of the estimated A$1.2bn construction costs to be found from private entrepreneurs.

The reaction since Mr Howard promised the federal money on Saturday has been a mixture of excitement among diehard railway buffs and scepticism from hard-nosed economic analysts, who say it will turn into one of the greatest white elephants in the history of railway-building.

The Alice Springs-Darwin line was first suggested in Australia's colonial era as part of a grand vision of a 3,000km line that would link the continent from south to north, enabling it to tie in to the lucrative markets of Asia just across the sea from Darwin.

An east-west transcontinental line was built early this century, connecting isolated Western Australia with the populous eastern cities of Sydney and Melbourne. But the north-south dream remained just that.

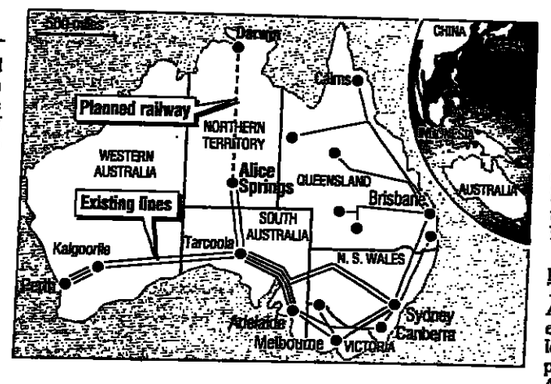
A line north from Adelaide, through sandhills and desert scrub, was opened in 1929. But it finished at Alice Springs, and various reports and inquiries since then – often commissioned by federal political leaders as elections approach – have recommended that it would be economic madness to finish the line up to Darwin.

But in the 1990s, railways in Australia, as elsewhere, are undergoing a revival. The new argument goes that Darwin, whose port is being hugely expanded, could become Australia's main entry point for sea trade, and that the new railway line could become a high-speed freight link with the rest of the country, slashing days and even weeks off journeys to Japan and other Asian centres from existing, inefficient ports in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth.

There are also two elections pending, one in the Northern Territory, the other in South Australia. The conservative Liberal Party that Mr Howard leads in Canberra also holds power in Adelaide, the South Australian capital; its equivalent reigns in Darwin, the Northern Territory capital.

But Mr Howard sounds serious. The federal money he has promised will come from a so-called Federation Fund of A$1bn that his government has set up to fund projects of national significance leading up to the centenary of Australia's federation in 2001.

If the railway does get built this time, it will need a lot of freight to make it pay its way. The route through the Northern Territory contains less than 1 per cent of Australia's population of 18 million, so there will be very few paying passengers along the track.



Peking dressed up for the Party

Teresa Poole
Peking

Bright pink and red banners are appearing on the streets of Peking exhorting everyone with such slogans as "Improve the quality of the citizens' morality". Some 2,000 delegates to the Communist Party Congress, held once every five years, have been selected, including 500 "model workers, outstanding experts, and heroes from all walks of life". But one key bit of information is missing: when on earth is the Congress going to start?

China watchers, diplomats and journalists living in Peking these days no longer greet each other with polite inquiries about each other's summer holidays, but with a plaintive: "What have you heard about the start of the Congress?"

The importance of this political event is huge: this is when the top jobs are sorted out for the next five years, and when China will outline its goals for the new century, including a revamping of the massive state enterprise sector.

But that does not mean that the Chinese government intends to give us much warning of when it will occur. One recent headline about the forthcoming event read: "Reform and open policies to remain." Not that open, unfortunately. It is probably going to start within a couple of weeks or so, but don't quote me on that.

China's obsessive secrecy about its political process is still well-entrenched. This week, the foreign media around the world was invited to send in applications to cover the Congress – the only problem being that none of them have been given any clue to when they should plan to be in Peking for this important occasion. Never mind that it is peak tourist season and flights need to be booked.

The official media is already in Congress mode. The *China Daily* has been running a series of articles outlining the "monumental success" of President Jiang Zemin and his fellow leaders in running the country since 1992.

It should be interesting when it does finally start. Mr Jiang wants to put his stamp on the post-Deng era with an ambitious plan to turn more state-owned enterprises into shareholding companies – with some semantic manoeuvrings that this is just another form of public ownership. It would have been political heresy 20 years ago. But then, in those days, no one even knew a party congress was expected until it was all over.

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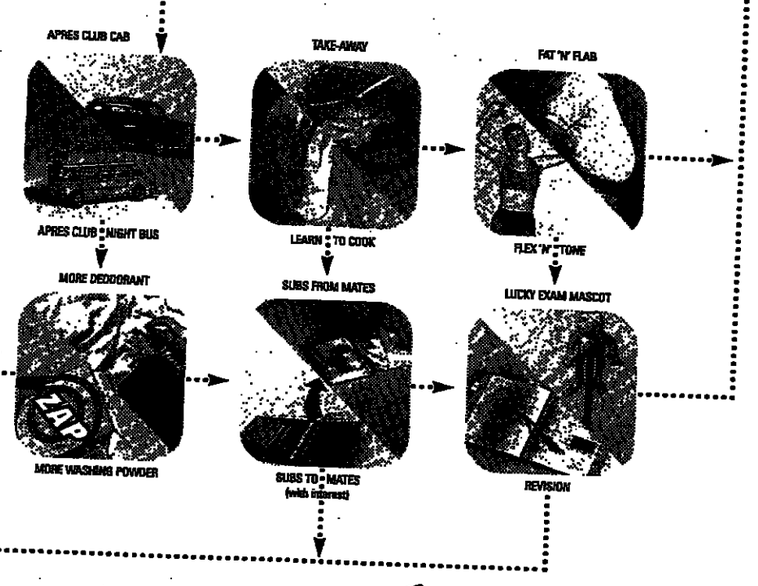

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Indians urged to fight for freedom

Peter Popham
New Delhi

In the vast colonnaded sandstone drum of India's parliament building, where 50 years ago Jawaharlal Nehru spoke of India awaking to freedom, the Speaker of Lok Sabha, the lower house, called yesterday for "a second freedom struggle".

This time, he said, the struggle should be for "freedom from our own internal contradictions between our prosperity and poverty, between the plenty of our resource endowments and the scarcity of their prudent management, between our culture of peace and tolerance and our current conduct sliding towards violence, intolerance and discrimination".

Under Rule 360 of India's constitution, the Speaker can address Lok Sabha on his own initiative. This right had never been exercised, but Mr Sangma, a member of the Garo tribe from Assam and a member of the Congress party, decided such an unprecedented sitting would be an appropriate way to mark the nation's golden jubilee. The debate he has set in motion will continue for four days, mulling the entire state of the nation.

Mr Sangma's remarks seesawed between congratulation at the survival of democracy, and dismay at a polity in which "the chain of accountability of the civil service to the political executive, of the political executive to the legislature and of the legislature to the people has got snapped all the way".

The emphasis fell on the failures: 460 million illiterates, a 1 per cent share in world exports, stagnation in the ratio of employment in industry and a share of foreign direct investment into all developing countries of less than three-quarters of 1 per cent. "Means can be created only by generation of wealth," Mr Sangma suggested. "Even the People's Republic of China has come to accept this position."

The House he addressed is very different from the one to which Nehru spoke. Then, and throughout India's first 40 years, it was dominated by Congress; today it is a mass of bickering parties with no single one dominating. Then, it was ruled by the educated, English-speaking élite; today many MPs, "Bandit Queen" Phoolan Devi being the best-known, are from low castes and a number are, like her, illiterate. Then the centre ruled the states; increasingly the states dictate to the centre.

Yet amid such drastic change, Mr Sangma is a paragon of the ideals that set Indian democracy rolling. Born into a poor family from a peripheral minority, inculcated thanks to missionaries in the importance of hard work and liberal values, he epitomises the secularism on which India's hopes for unity have always rested. Barely a month ago he came close to resigning as Speaker when the House dissolved in shouting and uproar. "I can't preside over this House: I feel ashamed to be the Speaker of this Parliament," he told MPs then over the hubbub. But although yesterday he spoke of "frequent bouts of pandemonium in the House" and the need for aspiring MPs to have training in proper behaviour, he is not that easily beaten. In addition to a law degree, Mr Sangma has taught in nursery school and as Minister of Labour he had to tackle India's 50,000 trade unions. "When you've handled unions, you can handle anything," he once remarked.

Victims: Children affected by tear-gas fired into their school by Israeli troops tackling Palestinian stonethrowers in Bethlehem Photograph: AP

Israeli isolation squeezes the life and peace out of Bethlehem

Eric Silver on a town made idle and resentful

Bethlehem — Imad Masalmeh dozes in the doorway of his fruit and vegetable shop in Bethlehem's wholesale market. It is noon. On a normal August day you would have to elbow your way through a crush of Palestinian housewives, prodding for ripeness, bargaining over prices, lugging home baskets of grapes, bananas and aubergines, mint and parsley, all the fruits of the earth and the tree.

Today the market is deserted. Mr Masalmeh, who supports an extended family of 22, opens his cash box to reveal a few coins, perhaps 100 shekels, about £18. "Usually," he claims, "I would have sold 3,000 shekels' worth of produce by this time."

He hauls out a box of bruised apples and pears. "I take these home for the family," he says. His shop is well stocked. It is not that there is no food in town. People just don't have the money to buy more than the basics – tomatoes, onions, potatoes.

One month after two Palestinian suicide bombers killed 14 Israeli civilians in a Jerusalem market, Bethlehem is the only West Bank town still cut off from both Israel and its neighbouring Arab communities. David Bar-Illan, an Israeli spokesman, explains: "We have reports from our security services that possible terrorist operations are being planned by individuals in Bethlehem. As long as those reports remain valid, the closure on Bethlehem will continue."

Jesus's native town, which has been under Palestinian self-rule for nearly two years, languishes in its isolation, idle, resentful and totally unconvinced by Israel's security argument. With the blessing of Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority, young protesters stage a daily rerun of the *intifada* riots at a checkpoint near the biblical Rachel's tomb.

"This is a ghost town," says Mayor Hanna Nasser, waving from his office over an empty Manger Square. "Everything is frozen. The people are very close to losing hope. The Prime Minister of Israel is killing the spirit of the peace process."

Mr Nasser estimates the loss of income from tourism, factories, farms and outside jobs in the first month of the siege at $7m (£4.375m). About 80 per cent of the town's 35,000 residents, he says, are unemployed. "Nobody's working. Day labourers can't get to Israel, and even local factories are having to close because their raw materials are not being cleared from Israeli ports."

Khalid Bandak, manager of the 50-room Grand Hotel, hosts not a single guest. Three groups of Christian pilgrims have cancelled at the last minute.

"We have had to lay off 12 workers, most of our staff," Mr Bandak reports. "We can't pay them because we have no money coming in. We've lost about $45,000."

Just as people are not starving in Bethlehem, they are not dying for want of medicines. The Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, ordered that foodstuffs and medical supplies be allowed through the blockade. But people are suffering the kind of cliff-hangers that, sooner or later, will lead to tragedy.

> 'Everything is frozen. The people are close to losing hope'

Mohammed Manasreh's 85-year-old mother lives in a village outside Bethlehem. Because of a chronic heart condition, she needs oxygen. Every three days, Mr Manasreh goes to replace the cylinder. He lives in Bethlehem, his mother in an area under Israeli security control. To get there he has to drive through back roads and hope the Israelis don't catch him. This week the army blocked one of his favourite routes with boulders, but so far he's been lucky.

The West Bank medical services are interdependent. Bethlehem's Hussein hospital has a cancer unit, but intensive-care cases are sent 16 miles to Ramallah. One night it took the Bethlehem hospital's only ambulance two hours to run the gauntlet of security checks and ferry a 43-year-old man in a coma to Ramallah for emergency dialysis.

Bethlehem wanted the Oslo peace process to succeed. It has always tried to avoid confrontation. To flourish, it needs open borders and international confidence. The Palestinian Authority pinned its hopes on "Bethlehem 2000", when record numbers of pilgrims were expected.

Now disenchantment is setting in. Every conspiracy theory has its takers. "The siege of Bethlehem has nothing to do with security," contends Salah Tamari, who represents the town in the Palestinian parliament and accuses Israel of plotting an alternative Bethlehem on the Har Homa construction site between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. "The Israelis," he charges, "are implementing a premeditated plan to strangle the Palestinian economy."

Israeli security chiefs are warning Mr Netanyahu of an impending explosion of rage on the West Bank. In Bethlehem this bleak August it sounds all too likely.

Bonn ready for new start with Tehran

Germany is ready for a "fresh start" in relations with Iran, the Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel, said yesterday.

His comments give cautious room for optimism that links between Iran and member-states of the European Union - sundered since a Berlin court in April linked Iranian leaders to the killings of dissidents abroad - may be restored.

The climate has improved since Iran elected a relatively moderate new president, Muhammad Khatami, who took office this month.

Iran's new Foreign Minister, Kamal Kharrazi, was quoted as saying he was ready to meet European counterparts to discuss strained relations.

Mr Kharrazi told the *Iran News* that he was willing to meet EU ministers during the United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York next month.

"I'll meet with them if they so wish. I have no problem with meeting any European foreign minister and I'm ready to take advantage of the opportunity provided by the General Assembly and meet with all my counterparts ... if they so wish."

Mr Kharrazi, Iran's former ambassador to the United Nations, said in the newspaper interview Iran had "historical ties with EU member-countries and we have had our shares of ups and downs in our relations with them".

Mr Kinkel said in a newspaper interview for publication today: "After a lengthy pause in contacts, we will not ignore this wish. We should approach the evidently more liberal new government with openness."

All EU countries except Greece withdrew their ambassadors from Tehran in the wake of the ruling by a Berlin court that Iran's top leaders had ordered the 1992 assassination of four Kurdish dissidents in a restaurant in Berlin.

The EU also suspended its policy of "critical dialogue" with Tehran, a strategy which involved maintaining trade and political ties while also discussing human-rights issues.

Iran, which strongly rejected the court's verdict, has said the EU envoys can return to Tehran but has indicated the German ambassador must be the last, a formula which Bonn has denounced as an attempt to undermine the solidarity of EU partners.

Mr Kinkel repeated that the EU rejects any conditions linked to the return of the ambassadors.

Mr Kinkel also mentioned the name of Faraj Sarkuhi, an Iranian newspaper editor charged by Tehran with spying for Germany. Mr Sarkuhi, editor of the monthly *Adineh*, was arrested by Tehran in April and is due to stand trial soon.

Bonn feels some responsibility for Mr Sarkuhi, because his wife has been given asylum in Germany. It had been in regular contact with Tehran over the case.

KGB loses to Peter the Great

Moscow (Reuters) — President Boris Yeltsin decided yesterday that one of Russia's biggest military academies, named after the founder of the communist secret police, would instead carry the name of Tsar Peter the Great.

The Felix Dzerzhinsky Academy is an élite officer training school in Moscow. Mr Yeltsin's press service said its name was being changed "to revive historic traditions ... and recognise Peter I's achievement in creating a regular army".

Dzerzhinsky was a comrade-in-arms of Vladimir Lenin, founder of the Soviet Union. He is famous for setting up the Cheka, or Extraordinary Commission, to deal with "enemies of the working class". Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, died at the hands of the secret police after the revolution. The Cheka was succeeded by Stalin's even more notorious OGPU (Main Political Directorate) and eventually by the KGB (State Security Committee).

Peter the Great is also famous for his dictatorial rule, but his reforms transformed Russia from a closed, undeveloped country into a major European military force in the 18th century.

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Luigi Villoresi

Luigi Villoresi was one of the leading half-dozen racing drivers in the world during the decade following the Second World War and one of the last survivors who spanned the years between the racing of the 1930s and the modern World Championship era. Although never quite matching the brilliance of World Champions such as Juan Manuel Fangio and Alberto Ascari, he was a safe and skilful competitor who could make the very finest drivers work hard for their successes.

"Gigi" Villoresi was born in Milan in 1909. He started motor racing in 1931, driving a touring Lancia Lambda in minor hill climbs. In 1933, he drove in his first major event, the Mille Miglia, the great Italian road race, sharing the wheel of a sports Fiat Balilla with his younger brother Emilio. Continuing his career with the Fiat, he won the Italian 1100cc sports car championship in 1935.

The following year, he bought a 1500cc Maserati and entered the tough and competitive world of voiturette racing, gaining his first major win at Brno in Czechslovakia in 1937. This was the turning-point in his career and the next year he became a Maserati "works" drivers, one of his greatest rivals being his brother Emilio who was now racing for Alfa Romeo.

Villaresi won three major voiturette races in 1938 and became the Italian 1500cc champion. The association with Maserati continued and he won three more important voiturette races in 1939, though the death of Emilio in June that year, while testing an Alfa Romeo, was a cruel blow. During an abbreviated season in 1940 before Italy entered the War, Villoresi repeated his 1939 victory in the Targa Florio and thus won the last motor race in Europe for five years.

When racing resumed in 1946, the voiturettes of pre-war racing had now been promoted to being full grand prix cars and Villoresi won the Marseille Grand Prix, the first event of the season, now driving for Scuderia Milan, a disguise for the Maserati "works" entries. The victories continued throughout the 1946 seasons and 1947 seasons and Villoresi now had a young protégé, Alberto Ascari, whom he had introduced to the sport in 1940. Ascari was a good pupil and it was soon evident the pupil was becoming quicker than the master. Off the track, Villoresi and Ascari were business partners in Milan.

Life was getting hard for the Maserati drivers as the cars were not as fast, nor as reliable, as the great Alfa Romeo rivals which swept the board whenever they raced. Despite this, Villoresi remained with Maserati and became Italian champion for 1947 and 1948, mainly by picking up victories in those races where Alfa Romeo stayed away. In October 1948, Villoresi won the first British Grand Prix to be run at Silverstone where he beat Ascari into second place.

The emerging firm of Ferrari had made a tentative entry into Grand Prix racing in 1948, and for the 1949 season, Villoresi abandoned Maserati and with Ascari signed up with Ferrari, bringing his valuable experience to the new team. That year, Villoresi won the Dutch Grand Prix at Zandvoort and had several places mostly behind Ascari. But 1950, when the World Championships began, was a thin year. Ferrari was developing new unsupercharged cars to combat Alfa Romeo so Villoresi and Ascari marked time. At Geneva, Villoresi had the only major accident of his career so he missed the latter half of the season while he recovered.

In addition to driving in grands prix for Ferrari, Villoresi was also contracted to race sports cars and in April 1951 he gained probably his greatest victory in winning the legendary Pulle Miglia in a 4.1 litre Ferrari. The 1951 Grand Prix season saw the new Ferraris topple the previously unbeatable Alfa Romeos and Villoresi picked up a number of places, now racing against a new generation of drivers such as Juan Manuel Fangio and Froilan Gonzalez. At the end of the year, his tally of points placed him fifth in the World Championship.

Alfa Romeo stopped racing at the end of 1951, so in 1952, Ferrari was all-conquering in the new two-litre grand prix formula. Villoresi was now the third string in the team behind Ascari and the 1950 World Champion Giuseppe Farina, but he missed the first half of the season after being injured in a road accident though he had three wins in non-championship races. In 1953, the British driver Mike Hawthorn also joined the Ferrari team but Villoresi had a steady season with a number of places and again was fifth in the World Championship placings, two points behind Hawthorn.

He was still racing Ferrari sports cars and with a 4.1, won the 670-mile Giro di Sicilia and the Monza Grand Prix with a three-litre. At the end of 1953, Villoresi and Ascari left Ferrari to join Lancia which had decided to enter Grand Prix racing. It was a disastrous decision, the Lancias were not ready and virtually the whole 1954 season was wasted. To keep his hand in, Villoresi went back to Maserati for the latter half of the season.

When the Lancias appeared in 1955 they showed promise and Villoresi picked some places but in May, Ascari was killed testing a sports Ferrari at Monza and Lancia withdrew from racing, leaving a bereft Villoresi, as Ascari had very much taken the place of Emilio.

At the end of the 1955 season, he returned to his old love, Maserati, and had some drives with a 250F as a private entrant. Continuing with Maserati in 1956, he picked up a handful of championship points and drove his last race in the Italian Grand Prix at Monza, fittingly once again in a "works" 250F. Villoresi was now 47, and knew it was time for him to retire.

For many years Luigi Villoresi attended Grand Prix races as an honoured spectator, but in old age he became frail and destitute, as unlike the modern drivers he had made little money from his racing.

He was unmarried and with no family, so Don Sergio Mantovani, a parish priest in Modena and the unofficial chaplain of Italian motor racing arranged for him to be cared for in a local monastery. In 1996, word reached England that Villoresi was short of funds for his maintenance. A quiet man with a courteous charm, he had always been held in special regard by British enthusiasts and there was an immediate and generous response to meet his needs.

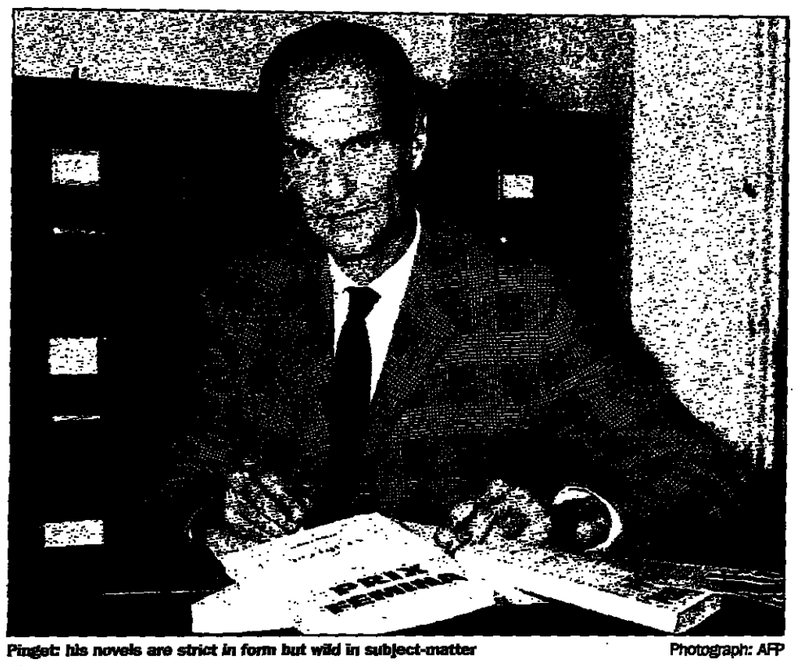
David Venables

Luigi "Gigi" Villoresi, racing driver: born Milan 16 May 1909; died Modena, Italy 24 August 1997.

Skilful: Villoresi after winning the British Grand Prix at Silverstone, 1948 – the first grand prix held there

Photograph: Guy Griffiths

Robert Pinget



Pinget: his novels are strict in form but wild in subject-matter

Photograph: AFP

Robert Pinget trained to be a lawyer, had ideas of becoming a cellist, tried to live in Paris as a painter, and ended up being a novelist, one of the most artful, distinctive and enjoyable novelists to have written in French since 1945.

A great first influence, and a friend, was Samuel Beckett, who liked what Pinget wrote and even translated some of it into an Irish English. They were alike in their famous reticence, their anxieties and their saving humour; and in writing above all in loving imitation of the human voice.

Pinget was soon associated with the writers of the "*nouveau roman*" (the "New Novel"), much brasher figures than himself, who had broken fiercely away from the dead (as they believed) conventions of straightforward plots and well-formed characters. In his unassuming way, he joined the avant-garde, though he would take no real part in its propaganda for itself.

As stories, his novels never add up, because they are full of hilarious backtracking and contradictions; and he creates no graspable characters, only hauntingly garrulous voices, forming the most unreliable and inventive of choruses – understandably, he was drawn to write also for the radio, and produced some memorable radio plays. Language, not events, is what obsesses Pinget, who said, in one of the rare accounts he ever gave publicly of how he worked, that in each new novel he was trying to find and maintain a certain "tone".

This was one reminder of his expertise in music; another was the actual title of one of his best books, *La passacaille* (1969), which is a transposition into prose of that complicated musical form, and evidence that, random though they could easily seem, Pinget's novels are made with the utmost care and artistry. Strict in form but wild in subject-matter, they are without exception a delight.

Largely, too, they interlock, being located in the one imaginary French province "between Fantoine and Agapa" as his very first title (1951) has it, where melodramatic and usually rather nasty things are forever happening (or are said to be happening). This unholy district is fertile in legend, scandal and criminality, even if nothing of what gets said there is ever finally confirmed as fact.

Pinget's materpiece in this mock-epic genre is his longest novel, of 1961, *L'inquisitoire* ("The Inquisitory"), which is offered as the transcript of a forensic investigation that uncovers a glorious variety of local turpitude, with so many ramifications that it rambles to a close only because the inquisitor is too exhausted to continue.

Pinget's chosen territory is not at all a nice place, seeing what great malevolence most of its inhabitants feel towards one another, and what a lot of not necessarily comic death it contains.

He did not take a cheerful view, in fact, either of human life or of what it ends in, so that there is a thoroughly sombre edge to his comedy. In his later novels he is writing, I suspect, as a religious believer, for whom the Logos had at last come to seem a uniquely credible voice, sounding somewhere above the futile human cacophany.

Pinget remained to the end a writer ill at ease in the world and shy of publicity, a man "of inconceivable modesty" in the words of his own publisher. He seems even to have worried that he had given himself to literature for unworthy reasons, as an evasion, when he should have been doing something more useful in life, or more serious. His readers – and there should be more of them – can be forever grateful that he chose to spend his time as he did, writing.

John Sturrock

Robert Pinget, novelist and dramatist: born Geneva, Switzerland 19 July 1919; author of Fantoine et Agapa *1951,* Mahu et le matériau *1952,* Le renard et la boussole *1955,* Graal Flibuste *1956,* Baga *1958,* Le fiston *1959,* Lettre morte *1959,* La manivelle *1960,* Clope au dossier *1961,* Architruc *1961,* L'hypothèse *1961,* L'inquisitoire *1962,* Quelqu'un *1965,* Autour de Mortin *1965,* Le libera *1968,* La passacaille *1969,* Fable *1971,* Identité, Abel et Bela *1971,* Paralchimie *1973,* Cette voix *1975,* L'Apocryphe *1980,* Monsieur Songe *1982,* Le harnais *1984,* L'Ennemi *1987,* Théo ou le temps neuf *1991; died Tours, France 25 August 1997.*

John Guest

For nearly three decades after the Second World War John Guest, at Longmans Green, was among the outstanding editors in London publishing.

When in 1972 the dramatic news broke that the Longmans general list was to close, he became a freelance advisor to Penguin, where on occasions he continued with his amazingly meticulous editing. Many of the authors he helped became friends – Christopher Hibbert especially – and their roll-call includes some famous names: David Storey, Mary Renault, Stevie Smith, Gavin Maxwell, Wilfred Thesiger, Nina Bawden, Philip Caraman SJ, Francis King, Richard Adams, M.M. Kaye, John Cornwell; as well as some once highly regarded writers, now less well known, such as Edward Hyams and L.T.C. Rolt.

He also assisted Anthony Eden with his memoirs, and was the editor of the very successful *The Best of Betjeman* (1978) for Penguin. In 1949 his own autobiographical book, *Broken Images*, was published, now regarded as a war classic, and in that year the winner of the Heinemann prize for literature.

He was born in 1911, the eldest of two sons, and spent his childhood at Grappenhall, near Warrington. His father was in the leather trade, a bit of an autocrat and latterly an alcoholic. His mother on the other hand was a sweet-natured, long-suffering woman, also from a family of leather merchants, the Bostons, an enormous tribe with many talented members, literary and artistic. He was educated at Fettes and Pembroke College, Cambridge.

As soon as possible he escaped to London, obtaining a proof-reading job at Collins, then with an emerging general list and in Pall Mall. In 1940, inspired by the example of Hammond Innes, he decided to volunteer, and chose to join the Anti-Aircraft – because, he was to say, he was such a crack shot (true). At any rate he was lucky to find himself in a gun emplacement with three exceptional characters, as high-spirited as himself; the poet Christopher Hassall, the architect Denys Lasdun and Angus Menzies, a socialite of immense charm, all of whom appear in *Broken Images* under pseudonyms. After OCTU they had to separate, and in fact from then onwards the book was based on journals he kept for Christopher Hassall in odd notebooks.

Guest found himself in the "Rough Riders", alias the City of London Yeomanry, actually artillery, and in due course went to North Africa and Italy, where he formed another great friendship, with Mark Longman, chairman to be of the publishing firm, which Guest joined in 1949.

Broken Images was by no means a blood and guts war book, and his writing was often compared to Kinglake's *Eothen* and Kilvert's *Diary*; one reviewer said he had the "concentrated vision" of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Sensitive and introspective, with a wonderful gift for describing natural scenery, he also revealed himself as a born raconteur with a wit that could be Rabelaisian. Throughout the war he carried a copy of *The Albatross Book of Living Verse*, from which he often quoted in *Broken Images*. He also collected all the numbers of Penguin New Writing and *Horizon*.

Oddly *Broken Images* was his only book. Perhaps too much of his energies went into other people's work, and no doubt his skill as an editor had something to do with his love of small-scale detail and tidiness. I certainly owed him a great debt in the years I shared a flat with him.

Guest: love of small-scale detail

Favouring tweeds and bright ties, he hated fuss, and hated extravagance. He loved travel, which provided many an after- (or before-) dinner tale, often repeated and embroidered upon – when for instance he was arrested for taking photographs (he was an excellent photographer) in a military zone at Gilgit in northern Kashmir and was "flung" into a squalid prison for thieves and prostitutes. He also had a passion for wild flowers, about which he was very knowledgeable, and enjoyed long country walks.

The repartee with the artist Felix Kelly, one of his greatest friends, was an entertainment in itself, and his jokes helped to enliven the Council of the Royal Society of Literature, on which he served for many years. For a long while he had a weekend cottage near Amersham, with a tiny immaculately weeded garden filled with his favourite annuals. As a lover of church organ music, he found a fellow enthusiast in his neighbour Mary Wilson, wife of the Prime Minister, and she became a firm friend. In his old age he complained of deafness and losing his eyesight. When he developed cancer he was cared for with great devotion by his Italian companion Enzo D'Aquila.

Raleigh Trevelyan

John Guest, publisher: born Warrington, Cheshire 4 October 1911; died London 24 August 1997.

Eric Halladay

Eric Halladay was the defining figure of Durham University rowing for a generation and a half.

In academic life he was thought of as the Red Adair of college leadership, being progressively Master of Grey College at Durham University from 1980, Rector of St Aidan's from 1990 and finally Principal of St Chad's from 1991. From 1982 until 1988 he was chairman of the Durham Regatta. The university Boat Club is still, after his going, a gentle, pleasant place, but not a soft touch, its graduates not only better oarsmen but also better people.

The son of a vicar, Halladay was educated at Durham School before St John's College, Cambridge. After a year of theology at Ripon Hall, an Anglican College in Oxford, he taught history at Exeter School. In 1960 he moved to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst to teach military history and to coach the Boat Club, with which he won his first Henley prize, the Ladies' Plate, in 1963. A year later he was at Durham lecturing in history and beginning his thirty years of devotion to the Boat Club.

He specialised in African history, especially the slave trade, and published *The Building of Modern Africa* (with D.D. Rooney, 1966) and *The Emergent Continent: Africa in the Nineteenth Century* (1972).

Although from 1980, when he became Master of Grey College, he was effectively a part-time academic, he remained a key member of the department. When briefly the historians were left without a professor to lead them, "Eric was the one all of us trusted to deal with the authorities. He would represent us forcibly and well without turning anything to unfair advantage," said one of his former colleagues.

It was on much the same recommendation that he was elected a Steward of Henley Royal Regatta in 1993. This was, perhaps, the honour he most enjoyed. At the same time he was chairman of the board of the Rowing Hall of Fame, which is to be part of the River and Rowing Museum due to open in Henley next year.

Although purportedly in retirement from 1994, he brought his thorough historical method to a series of short biographies of the men (mostly) who had shaped English rowing, much of it arising from his research for *Rowing in England*, published in 1990.

In the boathouse, as well as in college, Halladay had the art of deftly absorbing the locker room coarseness and other excesses of the roaring men and keeping the club on a even keel. He was much too clever at working with people ever to let them come to blows and achieved a Corinthian excellence most by the example of his own discipline and charm.

Halladay: Corinthian excellence

Halladay was known to softer southerners by his perpetual uniform of corduroys covered by waterproof overtrousers tucked into black gum boots. He moved with the times when his buff duffle coat gave way about 20 years ago to a green Barbour jacket which, subjected to the same hard Tyne weather that turned his head a permanent walnut brown, hung loose and soft from his shoulders; always underneath this rural shabbiness was a clean collar and tie. Over 30 winters he puffed at his pipe and part-coached and part-offered a whole culture of tolerant sporting honesty to his crews.

Once ashore, where he stood still, the floor would gradually be carpeted with Swan Vestas, although, ever conscientious, he tried to stuff them back in the box, as the pipe cradled in the left hand was used as a baton to conduct the telling of yarns and homilies.

For his funeral a packed local train from Newcastle dropped a cohort of dark-suited men on the platform with Corbridge on the opposite bank of the Tyne. As they walked over the bridge to the town, whole crews reformed for the first time since they had raced to hear Homer quoted: "Place on my tomb the oar with which I rowed with my friends when I was among living men".

Hugh Matheson

Eric Halladay, historian: born 9 July 1930; Senior History Master, Exeter School 1956-60; Senior Lecturer in History, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst 196-64; Senior Tutor and part-time Lecturer in History, Grey College, Durham University 1964-80, Vice-Master 1967-80, Master 1980-89, Rector 1989-91; Chairman, Durham Regatta 1982-88; Rector, St Aidan's College, Durham University 1990-91; Principal, St Chad's College, Durham University 1991-94; Steward, Henley Royal Regatta 1993; married 1956 Margaret Baister (one son, two daughters); died 19 July 1997.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

MOORE: To Kate and Damon, in Wantage Hospital, on 25 August, a son, Francis Thomas Constantine, brother to Galliver and Dickon (a grandson for J.Z. Young, who died in July).

DEATHS

ESSEN: On 24 August, Dr Louis Essen OBE, DSC, FRS, of Great Bookham, Surrey, died aged 88; after a short illness. No flowers please, but donations may be made to Friends of Bookham Commons (National Trust) and sent to Hawkins Funeral Directors, Leatherhead, Surrey.

KUSHLICK: Albert, died on 23 August 1997. During his life he helped so many to enjoy their lives and always had time to share a problem. He will be greatly missed by his family and all who knew him but his wisdoms will remain with us. Funeral at 2pm on Monday 1 September at Southampton Crematorium. Family flowers only, but donations if you wish to the Wessex Heart Foundation or ACTSA.

A Memorial Service to be arranged for the late autumn.

LIDBETTER: Mike, died suddenly, aged 54, in Frankfurt, on 22 August, at the start of the holiday with his loving wife. Will be missed by Cynth, Jo, John and Vicki. Family flowers only. Funeral enquiries and donations for a charity of the family's choice, to H. Handley, Funeral Directors, Bromyard, telephone 01885 482216.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2012 or faxed to 0171-293 2010.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr B. Collings and Lady L. E. Gordon Lennox

The engagement is announced between Benjamin, younger son of Mr and Mrs Roger Collings, of Thruxton, Herefordshire, and Louisa, youngest daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Richmond, Lennox and Gordon, of Goodwood, Chichester, West Sussex.

Marriages

Mr R. D. Tunnicliffe and Miss L. Thomas

The marriage took place, on 24 August, at St David's Church, Merthyr Tydfil, between Lynda, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Colin Thomas, of Troedyrhiw, Mid Glamorgan, and Richard, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Denis Tunnicliffe, of Bracknell, Berkshire.

Birthdays

Mr Gerhard Berger, motor racing driver, 38; Sir Donald Bradman, cricketer, 89; Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, 69; Sir Hugh Byatt, former diplomat, 70; Sir Stewart Crawford, former diplomat, 84; Lord Dormand of Easington, former government minister, 78; Miss Sian Edwards, conductor, 38; The Earl of Eglinton and Winton, former managing director, and deputy chairman, Gerrard & National Holdings, 58; Lady Antonia Fraser, writer, 65; Mr David Hart, trade union leader, 57; Mr Michael Holroyd, writer, 62; Mr Bernhard Langer, golfer, 40; Mr John Lloyd, tennis player, 43; Mr Andrew MacKay MP, 48; Sir James Molyneaux, former MP, 77; Sir Mark Potter, a Lord Justice of Appeal, 60; Viscount Rothermere, newspaper proprietor, 72; The Right Rev Richard Rutt, former Bishop of Leicester, 72; Mother Teresa, missionary, 87; Mr Andy Turnell, racehorse trainer, 49; Mr Robin Waterfield, bookseller and publisher, 83; Lt-Gen Sir John Watts, 67; Mr Edmund Weiner, lexicographer, 48.

Anniversaries

Births: Confucius, philosopher, 551 BC; Alessandro Farnese, Duke of Parma, general and diplomat, 1545; Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, philosopher, 1770; Hermann Kipper, music teacher, critic and composer, 1826; Heinrich Urban, composer, 1837; Umberto Giordano, composer, 1867; Karl Haushofer, soldier and geographer, 1869; Theodore Herman Albert Dreiser, novelist, 1871; Karl Bosch, industrial chemist, 1874; Lloyd Cassel Douglas, novelist, 1877; The Hon Charles Stewart Rolls, motor manufacturer, 1877; Samuel Goldwyn (Samuel Gelbfisch), film magnate, 1882; Eric Coates, viola player and composer, 1886; Cecil Scott Forester, novelist, 1899; Lyndon Baines Johnson, 36th US president, 1908; Martha Raye (Margaret Theresa Yvonne Reed), actress and comedienne, 1916. **Deaths:** Josquin Desprez, composer, 1521; Titian (Tiziano Vecelli), painter, a victim of the plague, 1576; Pope Sixtus V, 1590; Tomás Luis de Victoria, composer, 1611; Lope Felix de Vega Carpio, playwright and poet, 1635; James Thomson, poet, 1748; Johan George Schwartze, painter, 1874; John Henry Foley, sculptor, 1874; Eugène-Samuel Auguste Fromentin, novelist and painter, 1876; Sir Rowland Hill, founder of penny postage, 1879; Louis Botha, soldier and statesman, 1919; "Le Corbusier" (Charles-Edouard Jeanneret), architect, 1965; Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent, 1968; Dame Ivy Compton-Burnett, novelist, 1969; Haile Selassie, deposed Emperor of Ethiopia, 1975; Earl Mountbatten of Burma, murdered by the IRA 1979. **On this day:** Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar lost the Duchy of Franconia at the Battle of Nordlingen, 1634; the Battle of Long Island was fought, the British driving back the American army, 1776; the first balloon ascent was made in Britain by James Tytler at Edinburgh, 1784; the Declaration of the Rights of Man was adopted by the French National Assembly, 1789; Napoleon defeated the Austrians at the Battle of Dresden, 1813; Algiers, then a refuge for Barbary pirates, was bombarded by Lord Exmouth, 1816; Edwin Laurentine Drake was the first in the US to strike oil – at Titusville, Pennsylvania, 1859; the interior of the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, was destroyed by fire, 1892; the Kellogg-Briand Pact, an anti-war document, was signed by 15 nations, 1928; the Heinkel 178, first jet-propelled aircraft, made its first flight, 1939; the first transmission of a television programme from the Continent was made by the BBC, 1950; the Soviet Union launched *Sputnik 3*, carrying two dogs, 1958. **Today** is the Feast Day of St Caesarius of Arles, St David Lewis, Little St Hugh, St Marcellus of Tomi, St Margaret the Barefooted, St Monica and St Poemen

Lectures

National Gallery: Kathleen Adler, "Water, water ... (iv): four paintings by Sisley", 1pm.

Tate Gallery: Justine Hopkins, "Sea, Sky and Rock: abstract artists in St Ives", 1pm.

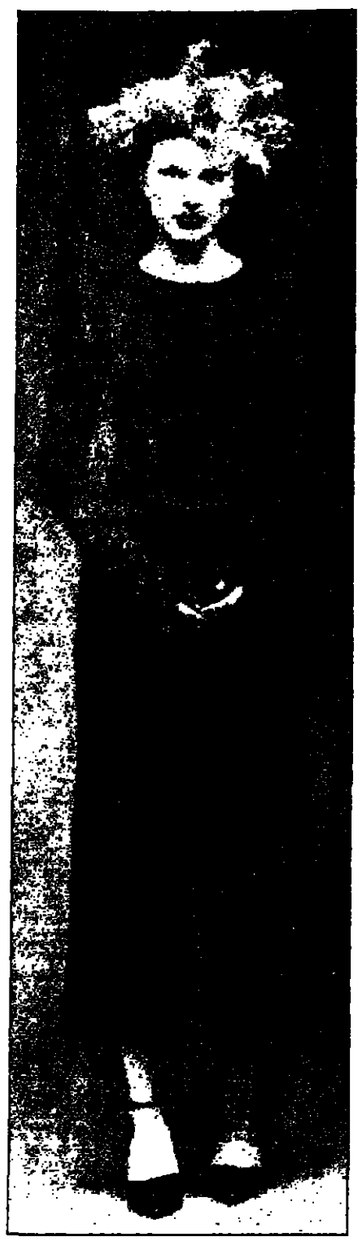
Changing of the Guard

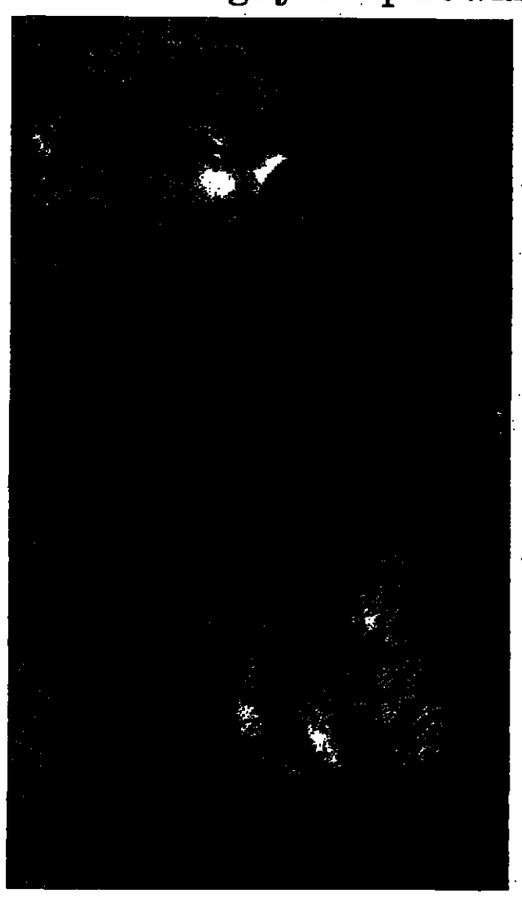
The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; Nijmegen Company Grenadier Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Scots Guards.

fashion

The big autumn spend

You know those long hot days are numbered when the high street reveals its autumn collections. And this time there's an exciting new crop of designers to encourage you to part with your money, says **Tamsin Blanchard.** Photographs by Sheridan Morley





Berry long-sleeve sweater (left), £295, and velvet panel skirt, £259, both by Jean Philippe Bouyer from Liberty, Regent Street, London W1; metallic snake-skin shoes with metal heel, £155, from selected branches of Russell & Bromley (inqs. 0171 629 6903)
Grey window-pain check single-breasted jacket with print (above), £858, grey trousers, £544, and grey V-neck, £286, all by Sonja Nuttall, available from Pollyanna, 12 Market Hill, Barnsley; Selfridges, Oxford Street, London W1; Koh Samui, 65 Monmouth Street, WC2; Liberty, Regent Street, W1

Stylist: Charlie Harrington
Hair and Make-up: Helen Bannon for Bannons Hair and Beauty.
Model: Michelle Gontier at Models 1.

Fashion runs on a calendar all its own: autumn wear hits the high street at least a month before the official end of summer time. This month, retailers could barely contain their excitement before wheeling out the new season's merchandise. Consumer spending is at an all-time high. The big autumn spend can begin. It might be 30degC and searing sunshine outside, but inside it's time to invest in a new coat, some knee-high boots and a winter suit.

What makes fashion constantly *interesting, and shopping endlessly* entertaining, is the constant turnover of new labels and collections. This autumn there is a crop of new labels to help entice you to part with your money. Three names to look out for are Jean-Philippe Bouyer, Sonja Nuttall and Ruti Danan.

Liberty in London's Regent Street does not shy away from testing obscure new labels. Buyers Angela Quaintrell and Lynette White have a keen eye for clothes that will give the customer something different, desirable and – most of the time – wearable. The new collections include French designer Jean-Philippe Bouyer and Sonja Nuttall, the British designer who has been out of circulation for three seasons *while concentrating on the* consultancy side of her business.

Bouyer, 38, is a definite winter designer, indulging in rich velvets, intense berry colours, and clothes that elongate but fully cover the body. He has worked for Karl Lagerfeld, shoe designer Charles Jourdan, Sonia Rykiel, and Paco Rabanne. He launched his first collection under his own name in 1994.

If you want to invest in a great grey suit, the must-have buy of the season, Sonja Nuttall is your woman. The thirtysomething designer staged her comeback at London Fashion Week last February.

"Tailoring is where my heart is," says Nuttall. "This collection is more grown-up than before. We've signed a manufacturing deal and I know the finished product will be really beau*tiful when it hits the stores in a cou*ple of weeks." The clothes are inspired by the style of Second World War photographer Lee Miller, with her tomboyish utilitarianism. They might seem expensive, but once you feel the cashmere and try on a jacket, you'll understand the price, even if you can't afford it.

Nuttall's collection spans the gap between the cutting edge and the luxury classics market perfectly. Nowhere is this more apparent than at fledgling designer emporium Koh Samui in London's Covent Garden. If you want to find out what's new, just take a trawl through the rails and become familiar with the collections of Clements Ribeiro, YMC, Justin Oh, Earley Palmeiro, Copperwheat Blundell, David Purves, Hussein Chalayan and Elspeth Gibson amongst others. Nuttall's refined, no-nonsense pieces are there alongside a newer name in tailoring, Ruti Danan.

The buyers and owners of Koh Samui, Paul Sexton and Talita Zoe, see new collections constantly. Anyone who rings up for an appointment gets seen.

Ruti Danan, an ex-assistant of Alexander McQueen, is one of their most promising finds. What attracted Koh Samui were the luxurious fabrics, the sharp tailoring and the unashamed femininity. This autumn is the first season Danan has designed a whole collection. "Her clothes are really well made and they flatter the female body in a way that is sexy, elegant, classy and *tasteful all at the same time,"* says Sexton. "They go in and out in all the right places."

Prices are high, with a low-cut evening dress costing £500. But according to Sexton and Zoe, there is a market for her clothes. Women are more inclined to spend upwards of £500 on a gold brocade jacket if it looks like it's a one-off. If you gauge the value of a garment by the time it has taken to make it, Ruti Danan's clothes are a bargain: she makes each piece by hand from start to finish. Similarly, the necklace shown here with the jacket was made by one of Koh Samui's young artisans, jewellery designer Sarah Weiss. A single necklace can take up to three months to make. A simple bracelet is more affordable at £79.

If you are in the market for a big winter wardrobe splash, now is the time. But hurry. Before you know it, there will be snow on the ground and the high street will have moved on to spring.

Rose and gold brocade jacket, £519, and double layered gold embroidered V-neck, £188, all by Ruti Danan; necklace £1,645, by Sarah Weiss, all Koh Samui as before

Meat and two veg, and a new look

Your supermarket's own brand fashion is starting to give designer labels a run for their money. By **Melanie Rickey**

Tesco might not have quite the cachet of Prada or Gucci ... yet. But increasingly, supermarkets are muscling in on fashion territory. Stores used to be exclusively for the sale of food and the daily necessities of life. You would certainly not expect an Adidas hooded top to appear a few aisles down from the washing powder in Tesco, but there they are. At Asda, too, it's possible to find a colourful stripey jumper not unlike those by Clemens Ribeiro, by resident designer George Davis. At Sainsbury's Savacentres, a camel trouser suit is a paltry £60. These clothes may not be for label queens, but where there is a gap in the market, it will be filled – and by who better than supermarkets, which can provide clothes at prices that are as easy to swallow as a chocolate eclair.

Tesco
Range: Items; style rating: 7/10; value for money 10/10
Tesco is making waves with bargain basement prices for Adidas sportswear, undercutting sports specialists and selling the stuff at prices equivalent to those in America. Sadly, the cut-price Levi 501s have sold out. Stocking up on sports gear is the main reason to shop for clothes at Tesco, but while you're there, take a look at Items, Tesco's own label featuring garments that can be worn day-to-day, such as jeans, sweatshirts and leggings in a wide range of sizes. Colours are black, white, navy and grey, with seasonal additions.
Prices: Basic jeans, £16; bootleg jeans, £20; moleskin jeans in chocolate brown and black, £26; 18" jersey mini-skirts, £12; leggings, £10. Also available – Adidas SL96 Plus Lea running shoes, £25, (usually £49.99); and Adidas branded T-shirts, £10, (usually £25). Inquiries: 0800-505 555.

Savacentre
Range: I.N.I.T.I.A.L.S; style rating: 6/10; value for money: 7/10
This range is sold as "directional fashion essentials for any occasion", and it looks good. There are plenty of bright hard-wearing clothes for children, casual separates for men, and suits and casualwear for women (sizes 10-18) in directional colours and styles. Great fleeces for winter. Inquiries: 01189 368 000

Asda
Range: George at Asda: style rating: 8/10; value for money: 7/10
This is the only range by a supermarket that attempts to keep up with fashion, and succeeds. There are clothes for men, women and children for everyday, special occasions, and a good old night on the town. For autumn knitwear and tailoring for women (sizes 8-18) it is very strong. The classic evening wear is awash with sequins and black chiffon. Worth a look, if only at the leopard-print underwear sets that wouldn't look out of place on the Princess of Wales. Inquiries: 0500-100 055.

Cecilia Chancellor wears polo-neck jumper, £19.99, chocolate brown suedette trousers, £22.99; George at Asda
Right: Men's orange V-neck T-shirt, £14; striped jogging bottoms, £20; sweatshirt, £20 and trainers, £19.99, all from Savacentre

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Labour must learn to live with fiery prep schools

Just as Easter is the season for state schoolteachers and heads to gather in English coastal resorts, so late summer is traditionally the time for genteel gatherings of their equivalents from the private sector. The Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools kicked off yesterday. Its current chairman, Robert Acheson, primed his right foot and let fly. His speech is worth reading by all those intending to send a child to a prep school: the IAPS does not like parents who divorce, who are not devout Christians, who are not prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder against the tide of cultural degradation lapping at the very classroom window.

If ever the National Union of Teachers – hardly a shrinking violet when it comes to exaggeration and complaint – wanted a lesson in blood-curdling rhetoric, hyperbole and extravagant language, they should apply to Mr Acheson and his colleagues, who yesterday applauded a scattershot denunciation of the BBC, contemporary mores, individualism, rationalism and social change.

This kind of bluster does nobody much good, especially the implicit contrast between the serene, hard-working, God-fearing prep schools and the noisy, disrupted free schools attended by the majority of pre-13-year-olds. Yet there may have been method in Mr Acheson's attack. Into it he dropped a calculated reference to the occasion – deep in the mists of political time, but clearly still very real to the prep-schoolers – when a Labour education minister came to them breathing fire and brimstone and threatening all manner of egalitarian readjustment in their disfavour. The fact that that minister, Roy Hattersley, is still breathing fire and brimstone and threatening all manner of egalitarian readjustment, but is completely out of power, is not the point; how easily could David Blunkett turn into something similar? Hasn't he already shown his mettle by moving to abolish assisted places?

It must be hoped that this is not going to be the tenor of relations between the private sector of education and Tony Blair's government. Mr Acheson's highly-coloured views may be representative of the lesser brethren among the prep school heads, but it is unlikely he speaks for schools with a sophisticated (and non-Christian) catchment, and it is certain that he does not speak for the post-13 sector, whose heads meet in their annual conclave soon. Labour's educational plans are plans for the majority of the schools catering for the vast majority of children, ie not the private sector. It is not directly engaged – only indirectly, in the sense that Labour's doctrine of educational improvement knows no bounds. It would be a foolish and spendthrift parent who ignored the indifferent results recorded by some private schools. The better private schools are, it should be remembered, especially susceptible to tests of "added value": the real test of a Clifton, or a Manchester Grammar is not their GCSE score but what they do with the immensely impressive abilities and attainments of the children they take in. If Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, does not make this point when he talks to the prep schools this week, he will be missing a trick.

The Labour Party at large still contains large reservoirs of antagonism towards both the principle and the practice of private schooling – this much is undeniable. A straw poll of Mr Blair's Cabinet on its theoretical abolition would be revealing. But this is suppressed sentiment, and that is how it is likely to remain. After all, the concordat with the private sector of business and industry is one of the administration's planks; it would be mighty inconsistent if this somehow were to exclude education's private side. The Government's passionate ambition to re-skill and upgrade the educational attainments of all children surely forbids any moves to diminish educational opportunity, anywhere. The abolition of assisted places was justified, partly because it does release some money for the vital task of bidding up standards in state schools – but in terms of numbers of children, it is a sideshow. The question is what else, if anything, the Government does with the private sector of schooling: are the next few years to see hostilities, mutual indifference, or some sort of beneficial engagement?

Ministers may need to remind themselves of the important part played by private schools in curriculum development (notably in maths and science) and in bedding down the GCSE; they would not need to look far among the members of the Headmasters' Conference/Girls' Schools Association to find heads who share their enthusiasm for broadening the sixth-form syllabus, even at the expense of A-level itself. As for exchanges of staff and pupils, these may be a gimmick but anything, however small, however transitory, that lessens the social ignorance of children must be worthwhile. But such things are best arranged bilaterally between schools and local authorities. There is no need for a heavy-handed national scheme – just buckets of good will.

Is there a case for more substantive interest by Labour ministers in private schools? It will be tempting. The Charities Commission, off its own bat, is reviewing the principled basis of charitable status which will, not for the first time, throw up questions about the tax paid and income received by private educational foundations (including Oxbridge colleges). Labour may never grow to love private education, but it must learn to live with it, constantly repeating to itself that mantra coined (by Neil Kinnock) to the effect that its task is to make state schools so good that parents have no incentive to turn away from them.

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This spicy drug belongs to us all

Patents are a way of stopping the competitive mechanism operating for a specific period of time. They ought to encourage research by offering inquirers (and the investors backing them) at least the possibility of a guaranteed stream of reward. For companies to seek to patent existing products with known properties is little short of legalised theft. It should not have taken the American Patent Office several years to respond to Indian claims against a patent on turmeric's healing properties. Indian households have used the spice as medicine for centuries. To have patented it (as opposed to compounds of turmeric, or derivatives) would have added nothing to knowledge and simply acted as a monopolistic, if entirely unenforceable, restraint.

• LETTERS TO THE EDITOR •

Hidden cost of goods that travel too far

Sir: The car has borne the brunt of criticism in the current transport debate. In terms of pollution it takes a great many cars to equate with one heavy goods vehicle. Because lorries are associated with industry and services their right of movement is rarely questioned. It is time the spotlight rested on those movements of goods vehicles which are a consequence of cheap fuel and low wages in distant countries.

There are grounds for concern when it is profitable for a clothing company in the North of England to shape trousers in its factory, then send them by road to Eastern Europe to be stitched, then return them to be distributed throughout the UK. Again, supermarkets pride themselves on offering wide choice – say, a yoghurt made in Greece with milk from Germany, alongside a virtually identical yoghurt made in the UK.

If such much-travelled goods bore a pollution tax which reflected the distance travelled and the mode of transport, we would begin to see shelf prices which represented the real cost in terms of damage to health and the environment. Overnight it would become economic to cut out and stitch the trousers in Yorkshire. Over a wide range of goods the economic advantage would tilt in favour of home-grown and manufactured products – good for employment and GDP.

Of necessity this would be an EU-wide pollution tax and opponents would doubtless condemn it as against the spirit of the Union in placing a damper on the free movement of goods. However, it would merely make goods bear the external costs and, at the same time, be a small but significant step towards a sustainable planet.

Professor PETER F SMITH
Chairman, Environment and Planning Committee
Royal Institute of British Architects
London W1

Sir: Little has been said about using rail piggyback services to get the juggernauts off the roads.

Now that we have the Channel Tunnel, and with proposals to upgrade the West Coast line (the extra cost to accommodate piggyback traffic is put at £100m only) trailers could move on rail cars from places such as Glasgow, Manchester and Liverpool to Milan and other European centres. The system has been used for years from French ports. With the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) coming on stream in a few years' time consideration should be given also to the piggyback traffic using the East Coast line, via Stratford, designated as a CTRL terminal.

All this was postulated by the Labour Party years ago, when John Prescott was shadow transport secretary, in a paper called *Moving Britain into Europe – A High-Speed Future for Transport*.

DONALD DAVIES
London EC4

Sir: Experience in Washington and other US cities has shown that strong incentives for the formation of "car pools" have proved acceptable in a car-owning democracy. By reserving many of its parking spaces for car pools a Boston firm has induced 39 per cent of its employees to adopt ride-sharing. Highway authorities have provided an incentive by reserving lanes on radial motorways for high-occupancy vehicles (HOVs).

Despite misgivings on the part of government policy-makers, an HOV lane is soon to be introduced in Leeds. The situation has become so urgent that there is a case for reserving HOV lanes on all the main radials that feed the most congested part of M25: M40, M4, M3 and A3. This would relieve peak-hour pressure on M25, where many car trips are transferring from one of these radials to another.

NIGEL SEYMER
Slaughter, Gloucestershire

Sir: Beatrice Purser (Letters, 21 August) is right in cautioning that car reduction measures could result in cars becoming the preserve of the rich.

Punitive taxation of road use is fundamentally at odds with the Government's aim of a flexible workforce. In the current climate of short-contract working and precarious job security, it seems grossly unfair to fine additionally those who are forced to seek work away from where they live.

IAN SANDERS
Shoreham, West Sussex

Cash squeeze on the NHS

Sir: You report ("Hospitals losing battle to cut lists", 22 August) that in response to the rise in NHS waiting lists "the BMA and opposition parties said there was no hope of cutting the waiting lists without extra cash for the NHS above the extra £1bn already pledged for hospitals in England next year." In fact, of the opposition parties, only the Liberal Democrats are calling for extra funding.

In fact, it is astonishing that the Labour government has the gall to blame the rise in waiting times on the Tory NHS spending record (a clearly inadequate average 3 per cent real-terms growth over the last 10 years) while at the same time adopting Tory NHS spending plans (a grossly inadequate flat growth over the next two years).

The so-called extra money for next year will be more than cancelled out by additional inflation and existing Trust and Health Authority deficits in the NHS. While Tory and Labour bicker over who is to blame for the crisis in the NHS, the Health Service is facing a medium-term funding squeeze from which it may never recover.

Labour's dual pledges to "save the NHS" and not to raise direct taxation for five years are incompatible. It looks increasingly as if it will be the sick and elderly rather than the well-off who will suffer from the inevitable betrayal of one of these election pledges.

Dr EVAN HARRIS MP
(Oxford W and Abingdon, Lib Dem)
House of Commons
London SW1

Sir: It has been clear for a long time that a great deal of the dentistry which is possible today is way beyond the means of a state service. ("Ministers study cut in free dentistry on the NHS", 15 August; Letters, 20 August). It is also true that dental undergraduate education is expensive. I am delighted to learn therefore that a new look is at last being taken at the funding of dentistry. It is to be hoped that the review will be comprehensive.

With a limited budget it is vital that the money which is made available for dentistry is spent as effectively as possible. The calculations must start with what the state can afford in the provision of dental care and the cost of undergraduate dental education. It should finish with what patients and undergraduates must be prepared to pay. Proper provision must also be made for the dental needs of those truly unable to afford basic dental care.

In recent times there have been two Nuffield inquiries into dentistry, one into dental education and the other into the use of auxiliaries in dentistry. Although each body had lay representatives, the committees were dominated by members of the dental profession, academics and practitioners. The reports were good but not surprisingly were dentist- rather than patient-orientated.

Perhaps now is the time to commission a third Nuffield-type inquiry. This should look into what the general public wants from the profession, rather than what dentists *think* they want or what they think is good for them.

The proposed committee should take as broad a view of dentistry as possible. It should undoubtedly have a predominance of lay members and a minority of dentists.

RICHARD JOHNS
Winchester

The writer is Emeritus Professor of Restorative Dentistry, University of Sheffield

Brief chance to end an injustice

Sir: The continuing detention in jail of asylum-seekers who have neither been tried nor convicted of any criminal offence is a denial of their fundamental human rights; they have already been oppressed in their own countries. In this administrative detention there is no right to bail. It is both unreasonable and unjust.

This practice could be ended now without loss of face. The longer the Government delays, the more it will become identified with past asylum polices and the harder politically it will become. The end of this practice (which has been criticised by both Amnesty International and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), would both be seen as a sign of our commitment to human rights and help to rebuild a respect for the rule of law. How long will we have to wait?

MICHAEL BARTLET
Parliamentary Liaison Secretary
The Religious Society of Friends in Britain (Quakers)
London NW1

Stay at home

Sir: In a week in which your news coverage has been dominated by our need to curb the damaging effects of car use, it is extraordinary that you should perpetuate the myth that a long-haul jet flight to look at elephants is green tourism. ("Cry freedom", 23 August). It is hard to get much farther from the truth.

Flying is the most energy-hungry means of travel and each passenger will produce about two tonnes of carbon dioxide for the southern African holiday mentioned. Much of the pollutants are then injected into a vulnerable part of the atmosphere.

It has become necessary to encourage such tourism only because southern nations are driven by the cosh of debt-repayment programmes imposed upon them by the rich nations of the north.

If you want a green holiday, it would be far better to catch the train to St Ives and donate the money saved to organisations that are fighting to overturn this global economic madness.

MARTIN HUGHES-JONES
Mid Devon Green Party
Sampford Peverell
Devon

Crowded holidays

Sir: Why do we bother with so many bank holidays? Britain is such a crowded little island, it simply cannot cope if we all take the day off and go looking for something to do.

Why not abolish them all and simply add the equivalent number of days to people's annual holiday entitlement? People should have the right to take Christmas and Easter off, should they be that way inclined.

I'm sure we'd all be a lot happier taking our days off when we wanted.

THOMAS WRIGHT
Fetcham
Surrey

Wrong people in the town hall

Sir: Christian Wolmar ("The little people of Paisley", 23 August) believes the way to prevent such incidents of "small-town corruption" as are alleged in places such as Doncaster, Hackney and Renfrewshire is to implement proportional representation.

Certainly, PR would cause administrations long accustomed to holding office in either Labour or Tory strongholds to adopt a more conciliatory and open style. But do political parties have a role to play in town hall politics any more?

A glib look at the situation in Hackney (with which I am painfully familiar) will show that party political or ideological differences count for nothing. By far the most pressing issue is finding candidates who are prepared to sacrifice their careers for the onerous joys of public office. Is it any wonder that places like Hackney are governed by the retired, the unemployed and the insane?

One way of improving matters would be to create a situation where employers would again be proud to see their employees elected to public office – paying councillors' expenses direct to the employer might make the prospect more appealing.

We should also look to the wealth of examples of local partnerships of service users, businesses and other stakeholders who manage local services directly. This type of partnership arrangement is being vigorously pursued by many local authorities (including Hackney) irrespective of political allegiance. Perhaps it is time for recalcitrant local authorities resistant to this style of democracy to be forced down the road of the "enabling" as opposed to the "controlling" local state.

Councillor JEREMY KILLINGRAY
(London Borough of Hackney, Labour)
London E8

A very short millennium

Sir: The news that the covering of the Millennium Dome may now last up to 25 years fails to move me. The whole project is virtually without meaning in the context of celebrating a new age.

One wonders what sort of monument the Victorians would have produced if they had fielded the new millennium. Apart from a celebration of themselves and their culture by way of a Crystal Palace-type exhibition (like, I suppose, our Dome), they would probably have constructed a specific monument, probably in granite and marble, inscribed with a few sonorous lines by Kipling. Complacent and overbearing perhaps, but such a monument would have had at least a fair chance of lasting 1,000 years, a small, dedicated "Hello" to our descendants.

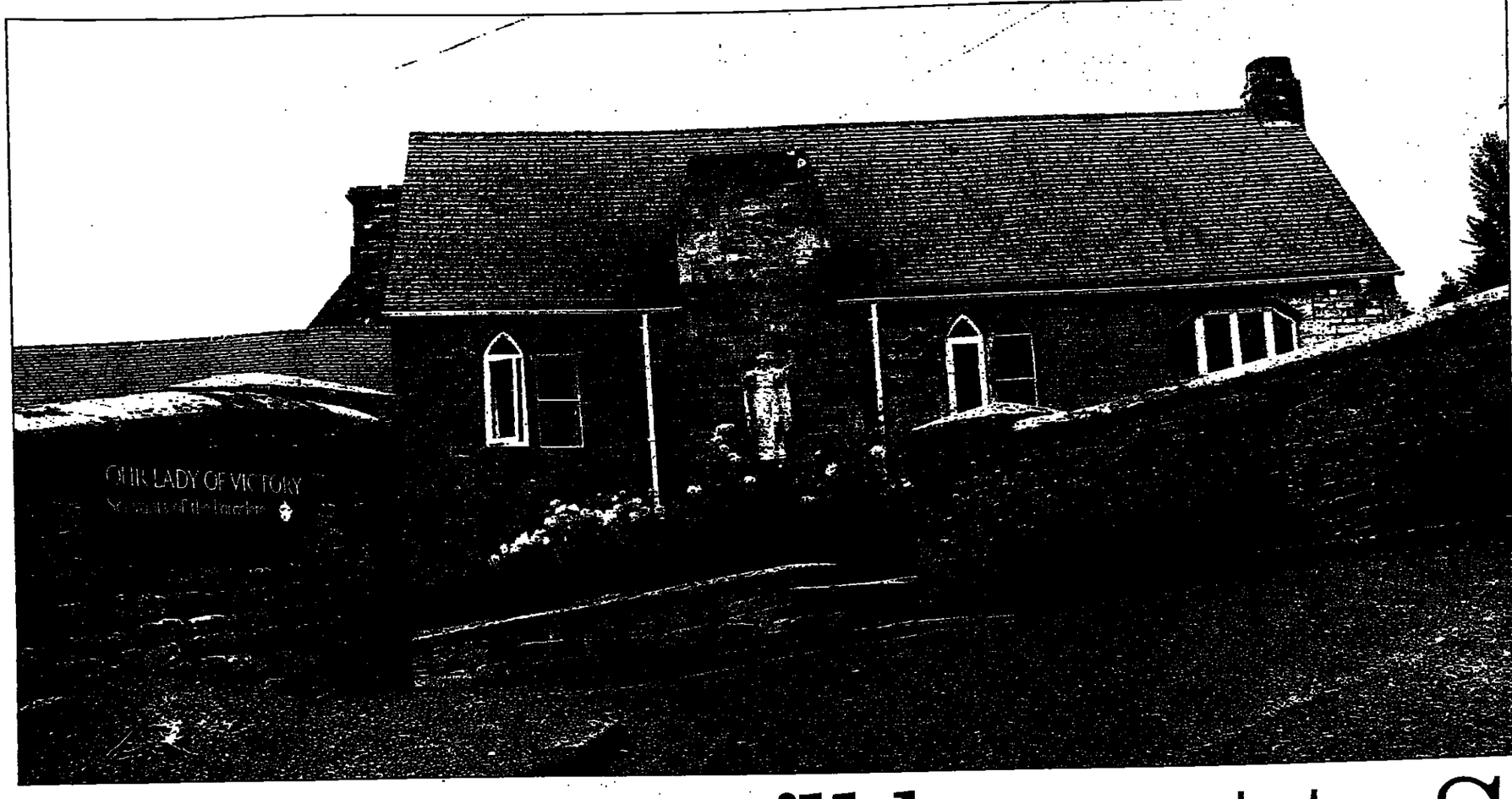
As it is, our millennium project will come and go, and not make much impression on anyone.

In 1,000 years, the free-market approach which has produced the Dome will presumably have been shown as either a great success or greater failure. Either way, the Dome builders will have left little or nothing to show that their hopes and dreams for our future extended much further than a single generation, let alone 1,000 years.

JAMES GOODMAN
Weston-super-Mare
North Somerset

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

first person



House of correction: the 'light has gone out of the eyes' of the residents, who have fallen foul of church rules, says a parish priest (below) who spent time there
Photographs: Nicola Kurtz

Behave, or you'll be sent to Stroud

What does the Catholic church do with gay clergy who insist on having active sex lives? It sends them to be re-educated in its own 'open prison' in the Cotswolds. One such priest speaks here of the 'worst week of his life' when he was sent for assessment at Our Lady of Victory

"To be sent to Stroud" – that is a phrase spoken with hushed tones at presbytery dining-tables around the country. I should know, because I was sent there.

Our Lady of Victory, near Stroud in Gloucestershire, lies within a valley. Set on a terrace with lawns sloping down to the woods, its appearance is that of a Cotswold manor-house, but there are modern additions, including extra bedrooms and a lecture room. Any observer would conclude that it is some form of educational institute or conference centre.

The house is occupied by the Servants of the Paraclete, an American religious order established at Jemez Springs, New Mexico, in 1947, by Fr Gerald Fitzgerald, who felt called to establish an order which would deal therapeutically with priests and religious brothers who were experiencing difficulties in their lives. The foundation had the enthusiastic support of the Archbishop of Santa Fe, and, indeed, a number of American bishops. In the Fifties other houses were established: in St Louis, Cleveland, and Vermont. An order of sisters was founded – the Handmaids of the Precious Blood, who still have a house at Jemez Springs. In the Sixties the order opened its only English house at Brownshill, near Stroud; to most priests it is known, simply, as "Stroud".

I was sent to Stroud – ostensibly for one week's assessment – when the bishop discovered that I was not just gay but also active. It was the worst week of my life. For although I had been told by the Vicar-General (a sort of diocesan prime minister) that I would be going to a place "in the south of England" from which I would "return a better priest", what I found was more in the order of an open prison.

Our Lady of Victory is not an easy place to find – which is why I was sent a map to enable me to find my way there – and the road signs are unsettling: "No Through Road," I read. "No Turning Back after this Point". I was shown to a small bedroom and visited by an elderly priest from Arizona who insisted that he had to search my luggage for "any alcohol or pornographic material." I had none, but was speechless nevertheless at this gross intrusion of privacy.

I swallowed my pride as I felt that, within a week, I should be free – best not to rock the boat, I thought. But in retrospect I wish I had. The rules of the house were then presented: no exeat in the first week; thereafter, exeats only in the company of at least one other resident, with all bars and pubs out of bounds. Even if a friend or member of my family came on a visit I would be permitted to go only to specified places – with another resident! To add to this horror, I then learned that if my assessment revealed a requirement to stay, I would not be leaving, and the "one week" might become six or seven months. I spent two sleepless nights and vowed that I would leave at the end of the week regardless: *nothing* would induce me to stay me to stay in that prison for any longer.

I was interviewed over the week by two priests and a female psychotherapist. The first priest was straightforward, and concluded quite rapidly that I would not benefit from any time there: "It would be like taking a sledgehammer to a nut." The psychotherapist also concluded that there would be no benefit from my stay, but, although hers was the most positive report, I found her attitude patronising and supercilious – perhaps she was just being "provocative and challenging". She liked to give the impression that she knew a great deal about the gay scene, asking about masturbation fantasies and health-risk activities, but she possessed a peculiar prejudice, claiming that gay relationships based on initial sexual attraction and activity had a "built-in destruction." She retracted this when I said that it need not be the case, and gave some examples; but she wondered if I was too firm in my defence of my sexuality, and "protesting too much." I replied that living in a homophobic Church and society was bound to make me defensive.

"What if you woke up to find yourself straight?" My answer – that I would accept it with a strong twinge of regret – earned the riposte: "You've rehearsed that before."

"Were you sexually abused as a child?"

"Not to my knowledge."

The worst suggestion was when she claimed that I had not sought sexual contact with a man whom I had counselled after the death of his lover because I feared that I might contract Aids (the lover had died of an Aids-related illness). I think I was silent at that point.

> **'A visiting bishop told the residents they were uniquely privileged for they were experiencing purgatory now'**

The second priest, the Father-Servant (the superior of the house) was cold and aloof, and gave away nothing. I read his report before he dispatched it to the bishop. It was an accurate, yet dispassionate, litany of my sexual activity; there was nothing about my underlying desire to seek companionship.

Initially, the Servants of the Paraclete dealt with alcoholic priests, adopting the 12 steps programme of Alcoholics Anonymous and combining this with spiritual renewal. The result is a regime which, besides heavily restricting the freedom of movement of the residents in terms of exeats and the lack of privacy when off the premises, ensures that the day is filled with a suffocating religious devotion.

Morning prayer precedes breakfast at about 8am; from about 9am there are sets of lectures/therapy with a mid-morning break. At about midday Mass is celebrated, followed by lunch. There is some free time after lunch, but at 4pm there is afternoon prayer, then a holy hour (Exposition), followed by evening prayer and Benediction, with a gap of about an hour until supper. In the evening there is some free time but also group sessions: curfew is 10pm or 10.30pm. I found this structure intensely claustrophobic and oppressive.

In recent years the increasing problem of paedophilia – or its exposure and admission – has led to the majority of priests there now being admitted for such offences, to the extent that the house is frequently oversubscribed. There are about 30 residents, two or three resident staff (all priests), visiting psychotherapists and a nurse, and administrative and catering staff drawn from the locality. The majority of the residents seemed reasonably happy and well-adjusted: they were very friendly and warm, yet I was struck by the impression that "the light had gone out of their eyes", and a few seemed given to a hard, almost manic, stare. The overall impression was one of resignation, that "the game was up"; and not a few conveyed a sense of subdued anger. Anger with themselves? Anger with the institution? Anger with life as a whole?

I observed as much as possible during my horrendous week at Stroud. It seemed impolite to ask the residents, "What are you in for?" and they never volunteered that information: but I did piece together a few impressions that tally with other accounts. Some men spend up to two years there. I met one whose name I linked to a report that he had been sentenced to two years for paedophile offences. Does this mean that such men (presumably with the agreement of the Home Office) serve their sentences not in prison but in Stroud? One resident remarked, "It's not unusual to see men leaving here in a black maria."

The methods of treatment must be severely unpleasant for sensitive men. One week was too much for me – the gross invasion of privacy, the lack of freedom of movement, and the oppressive, claustrophobic atmosphere. "The first six weeks here are hell," one of them said to me, "absolute hell;" and how I believed him. An appropriate observation: a visiting bishop told them that they were uniquely privileged, for they were experiencing their purgatory now. He and the rest of the faithful were obliged to wait until death! This purgatory lasts from six months to two years.

The effects of Stroud are difficult to gauge. I have met men who have passed through the place and are convinced that it has done them good, that it has allowed them to come to terms with their shortcomings. This may be well and good (although I am reminded of the aversion therapy heaped upon Alex in *A Clockwork Orange* – the transformation of an amoral lout into a moral pillar of society, by immoral means), but there are also stories of traumatic emotional and psychic damage. One of the residents is said to have committed suicide after learning of the abortion of his girlfriend's child, which followed her discovery that she could not speak to him, or even see him alone, for six months. How many more are there for whom hell, or purgatory, proved too much?

On my penultimate day, the Father-Servant (the superior of the house) summoned me. The assessment claimed that I "may be suffering from arrested psychosexual development and emotional immaturity," and that I "might benefit" from a residential course at another institution "to which [I] should be referred as soon as possible." I pondered over what I was supposed to be suffering from.

What is "arrested psychosexual development?" I am reminded of Quentin Crisp's epigrammatic statement to the magistrate in *The Naked Civil Servant*. He had been falsely accused of soliciting during the war, and it is revealed that he was excused military service because he was "suffering from sexual perversion." "Sexual pervert I may be," he says, "but I am certainly not suffering from it."

The writer is a Roman Catholic assistant priest who wishes to remain anonymous.

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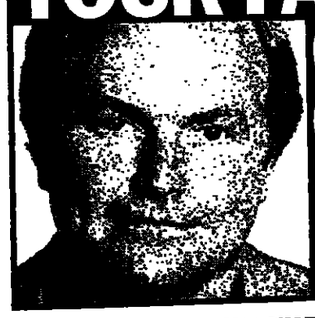

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If only I'd passed up 'Exit Charlie' ...

Miles Kington

One of my favourite travel books is called *By Rocking Chair Across America*. It was written by Alex Atkinson, with drawings by Ronald Searle. It is a very funny book. Even the opening is funny. It goes as follows: "Many books about America have been written by people who have only been in that country for a week or two. This one is different. It is written by someone who has never been there in his life."

Alex Atkinson wrote most of his stuff for *Punch* in the Forties and Fifties, and, like most regular *Punch* writers of the time, is now virtually forgotten, even though he wrote several books in collaboration with the far-from-forgotten Ronald Searle. By the time I started working for *Punch*, in the late Sixties, Atkinson was already dead, though I did get to meet some of the other elder statesmen of *Punch* such as H F Ellis and B A Young, and even Sir A P Herbert. (Men were not ashamed to wear initials in those unfashion-conscious days.) Humphrey Ellis is still alive and well in the West Country, and the last time I saw him I asked him about Alex Atkinson.

"Clever writer, but the drink did for him," he said gloomily. Then he brightened slightly. "He wrote a thriller, too, you know. A detective novel. Did you ever come across it? It was called *Exit Charlie*. Worth looking out for."

Now, if you have ever been a book collector, however mild, you will know the effect that a remark like that has on you. It sticks in your mind. You start looking for the book. You go into bookshops and head for the As. You look among the second-hand thrillers. When booksellers ask you (as they do) if you are looking for anything special, you say (because you know they will not have a copy): "Have you got *Exit Charlie* by Alex Atkinson?" and then the booksellers back away in awe because they have encountered a man who is in search of only one book, and is therefore doomed to disappointment. What they want is someone who says he is interested in autobiography or animals or Asia, not someone who says he is interested only in *Exit Charlie*, by Alex Atkinson ...

We now change the scene to Vermont, the state in New England which is famous for autumn foliage and winter skiing. My wife and I were there a month ago, meandering on the way to stay with in-laws in Toronto, and we happened upon an idyllic Vermont village called Craftsbury Common. It being summer, there was no foliage (unless you count green leaves) and there was no skiing (unless you count people whizzing past on roller skis, which are very long roller skates that people use to practise their cross-country skiing technique when there is no snow around ...), only lovely scenery, and white clapboard villages, and long dirt roads which snake through the woods. So we stayed a few nights at the The Inn at Craftsbury Common, which I would recommend highly for many reasons, one of which is that in the small kitchen in the annexe across the road, where we stayed, there are shelves of lovely second-hand books.

Including 'Exit Charlie', by Alex Atkinson!

I couldn't believe my eyes.

There it was. First American edition. Simon and Schuster. The book I had been looking for in vain for so long. There. On the shelves.

I had to steal it, of course.

But I am not a book thief.

So I had to borrow it.

But I didn't want to borrow it. I wanted to have it. I had been looking for this book for years!

So I had to buy it. But you don't buy the contents of a hotel.

So I went to the proprietress of the hotel and explained the situation and said: "Look, Mrs Schmitt," (for such is her name). "I am going to propose a deal with you. I have been looking for this book, *Exit Charlie*, by Alex Atkinson, for years. Yours is the only copy I have ever seen. I propose a swap. I have at home a spare copy of one of the funniest travel books of all time, *By Rocking Chair Across America*, by Alex Atkinson, with drawings by Ronald Searle ..."

I had done the right thing. Not only was she unaware she even owned *Exit Charlie*, but she was a great fan of Ronald Searle.

"Say no more," said Mrs Schmitt. "Take *Exit Charlie* and send me this book."

I took "Exit Charlie". I read it *en voyage*. (It isn't very good, alas.) I came home. I looked for the spare copy of *By Rocking Chair Across America* on my shelves. But I found I had misremembered. I do not have a spare copy. I only have my one dear copy of the book.

I now have another moral problem. What do I do?

a) Send back the undistinguished *Exit Charlie*?

b) Send my copy of the great *By Rocking Chair Across America*?

c) Move house?

d) Hope that some miraculous reader of *The Independent*, whether or not he is a book dealer, has a copy of *By Rocking Chair Across America* for sale to me ...?

A reader writes: Hold on, Mr Kington. Am I to understand that this whole article was a disguised Book Wanted ad?

Yes, I am afraid so.

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الاصل

Age 16: marriage or the Army, but no buying alcohol

Sara Maitland

> I really do not want 10-year-olds driving cars, or 12-year-olds abandoning education to be married. But the present situation is ridiculous

This week my son has taken, if not a massive stride, at least a large lurch towards adulthood: he's had his 16th birthday.

We're not talking about biology here – we've dealt with that more or less: shaving and voice-breaking and hormones and spots (not too many) and getting drunk the first time (with his grandmother, I might add). He's still growing taller, but apart from that the sociobiologists would call him a grown-up already.

So, too, would most societies, through most of history. Rites of passage for young males traditionally take place roughly in tune with their biological clocks; the Jewish Bar Mitzvah, designed to mark the moment when a boy becomes an adult man, for example, happens around his 13th birthday.

Until this century, children, except the offspring of the privileged, were contributing financially to the family long before they were my son's age, and they shouldered a burden of responsibility far greater than anything he will be asked to take on. While there is a great deal of debate about how much housework adult men do in the contemporary home, there is none about what sort of domestic contribution children should be making.

As a modern culture, we seem to take pride in extending the period of childhood. We both protect young people and exclude them from full citizenship for an increasing number of years. We do not ask them to "put aside childish things" even when at the physical level they are more than able to do so. We have divided biological maturity from social adulthood.

I am uncertain as to whether that is a good thing or not, but I am sure that we have not looked at all this properly. The extension of childhood has happened piecemeal over a long period of time, and there is now no coherence or even sense in the system.

Chatting with my son over the last week, I have come to realise just how confused and confusing the whole situation is in Britain now. From this week he has certain new, and real, freedoms. He may abandon education (although if he chooses to carry on, it will cost him, or me, nothing for another two years, and while he does continue I can claim Child Benefit for maintaining him). He may get married – in England he would need my consent, but in Scotland he would not. He may leave home (and with this I get a new right, too – I can throw him out.)

The basic contract between state, parent and child has radically changed; my son's and my involvement with each other becomes voluntary from here – except in assessing whether or not he'll have to pay for his tertiary education. He may join the Army, give consent to medical treatment, and buy tobacco or a lottery ticket. He may ride a motor bike, provided it is a very small one (50cc, which in effect means a moped). He can have sex, so long as it is with someone of the opposite gender.

These may seem substantial gains. On the other hand, there is a long list of things he may still not do – being, in the eyes of the law, too young.

But next year he will add to his collection of adult privileges. At 17, he will be allowed to ride a bigger motor bike, though not any longer drive a car – the age for this is being raised to 18 at the beginning of next year, so he will be in the first group of 17-year-olds to lose this right. (Thank God, thinks Mummy, who not only wants to hang on to her unique use of her vehicle, but is also too horribly aware of the dangers (though aren't motor bikes even more dangerous?)

He will be able to buy air-gun pellets; though by a peculiar quirk of the law he would require a gun licence to buy shotgun cartridges or rifle bullets – and there is no legal minimum age for him to have one of those, if he could persuade the local police of his suitability.

However, he will have to wait two years until he is fully adult. Until then, he may not buy alcohol, although he can consume it in a public place if someone else does the purchasing. He may not drive a car. He may not enter into a credit agreement, be a signatory to a will, be treated as an adult in relation to benefit claims, or have a homosexual relationship. And, of course, he will not be able to vote, even though, if he is earning, he will be treated as an adult in relation to taxation.

Perhaps it is wise to stagger the entry of the young into the world of adulthood, rather than offer them a single and dramatic ritual passage at the very point when their hormones are raging and their stability is questionable. But one does not get the sense that this lurching – and distinctly odd – programme of rights and responsibilities was ever a thought-out policy or decision. It is, rather, a random and ill-considered consequence of many different considerations.

In each separate case, most people would want there to be some minimum age. I really do not want 10-year-olds driving cars, or 12-year-olds abandoning education to get married. At the same time, the list is obviously arbitrary, ridiculous and unhelpful.

The Government has promised to reintroduce a Bill for an equal age of sexual consent. Perhaps while they are about it they could look at this whole issue in broader terms, bearing in mind that we do have taxation without representation, that we are prepared to ask young people to die in wars that they have no role in choosing, and that we will let someone get married whom we do not judge capable of buying a drink.

Luckily, my son does not want to get married; he says he "wouldn't be seen dead on a moped"; he's got no plans to leave home and no desire whatsoever to quit school. Sixteen "feels pretty much like 15", he says. Then he adds: "Look, use the article to say that I think the most important one of these things is equal age for sex for gays. It's unfair, it's wrong and it's stupid." It's his birthday, so I'll let him have the last word.

Why our politicians need to get a life

by Boyd Tonkin

Odd man out: William Hague's story remains untold, but biographies of (clockwise from top right) Nye Bevan, Clem Attlee, James Callaghan, John Major and Stafford Cripps are imminent

> The audience for political biography has shrunk for reasons deeper than stiff competition from studies of Posh Spice or the footballer David Beckham

When, a few years ago, Bloomsbury published the schmaltzy tittle-tattle that Anna Pasternak ghosted for James Hewitt about his romance with the then Princess of Wales, the publisher had to decide how to hide this torrid tome from tabloid eyes. According to one credible tale, its staff stuffed copies of the book in cartons that identified it as a work about the "future of socialism". They reckoned that no one would want to pilfer that.

Well, the future of socialism (after a fashion) now commands a 179-seat majority, while Hewitt – and Pasternak – have sunk into a well-deserved obscurity. But the story says a lot about how mainstream publishers view writing about politics and politicians. Only biography, it used to be argued, could rescue political books from the remainder shelves on its raft of drama and anecdote. "Read nothing but biography, for that is life without theory," exhorts a character in one of Disraeli's novels. Yet we now know that, even without the theory, the life of William Hague has failed to attract any takers. His Notting Hill Carnival revelation about enjoying steel-band music will hardly turn the prematurely grave Tory leader into a hot property. Now, if he had said drum-and-bass ...

Publishers' unwillingness to sign up for a Hagueography accords with the recent message from the bottom line. It's the same story with political memoirs. Many firms lost tidy sums in Thatcher's aftermath as one minister after another bailed out to spend more time with their word-processors. (Only 3,000 or so takers could be found for Norman Fowler's tedious apologia.) Boosted by genuine inside knowledge, and a rumoured team of backstage gag-writers, Baroness Thatcher's own memoirs fared much better, if not quite well enough to recoup Rupert Murdoch's vast outlay on them. Only Alan Clark's maverick diaries – with sex, style and cynicism oozing from every patrician page – really hit the jackpot. But then a political author with Clark's fund of sulphurous gossip comes along once in a true-blue moon.

You might imagine that the fate of Hague's unwanted life shows that publishers have at last learned their lesson. Far from it. Defying the market and the age, this autumn's catalogues still bulge with parliamentary potboilers. In the blue corner, Douglas Hurd defends his Foreign Office record, and Alan Clark himself – wearing his respectable historian's hat – will excavate his party's past. Out of the Wetlands spring Ian Gilmour and Julian Critchley, each peddling a fine old gloat about the Tories' electoral downfall. Meanwhile, John Major can fill those empty hours by reading a full-dress portrait of himself from a serious contemporary historian, Anthony Seldon.

On the other side, New Labour's triumph coincides with a surprising comeback for the giants of the old movement. In his epic authorised life of James Callaghan, Kenneth O Morgan will try to explain how the wily fixer drove his party straight into a brick wall 18 years thick. Francis Beckett's biography of Clem Attlee, and Chris Bryant's of Stafford Cripps, will prompt endless compare-and-contrast exercises making links with the Blair-Brown axis. Disgruntled leftists can curl up on autumn evenings with Michael Foot's one-volume abridgement of his classic life of Nye Bevan.

All these ventures deserve to thrive. Yet it's hard to dodge the fact that the audience for heavy-duty political biography has shrunk for reasons deeper than stiff competition from studies of Posh Spice or the footballer David Beckham. When Gladstone's cabinet colleague John Morley published his four volumes on the Grand Old Man in 1903 – or Moneypenny and Buckle weighed in with six on Disraeli a few years later – statesmen's lives in person and in print conformed to a model of heroic individualism. Log cabin to White House, went the US version, after Lincoln patented the route. You can witness a parallel progress, from Welsh cottage to Downing Street, in the remarkable rediscovered 1916 film of the *Life of Lloyd George*. Doorstop biographies – often composed by colleagues and disciples – likewise told of noble striving crowned by august maturity and a venerable old age.

Then the wheels fell off this pompous vehicle. First the heroism vanished from political lives; then the individualism. After Lytton Strachey skewered his *Eminent Victorians* (in 1918), biographers increasingly felt that every idol must have feet of clay. Soon they sought for clues in the bedroom as often as in the Cabinet room. More significant, perhaps, the liberal confidence in great men (and only men) as masters of destiny suffered one knock after another. From the well-drilled chaos of the First World War to the hi-tech anonymity of today's data networks, the century's vast, impersonal forces trumped the individual will time and again.

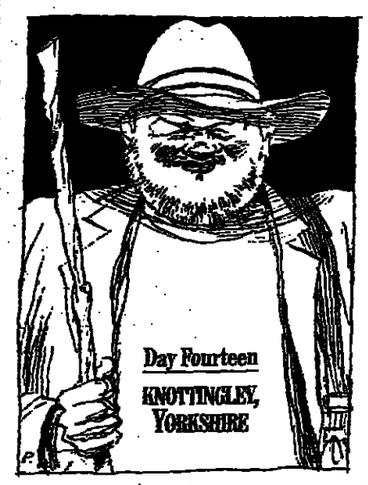
And politics entered a machine age of its own. Joe Klein's novel *Primary Colors* comes closer to the heart of a presidential campaign than any interim biography of Bill Clinton because it exposes the process as much as the product. It opens the engine room and lets us feel the sweat behind the smile. Our obsession with the shadow world of spin doctors – those ghosts in the machine – fits in with a hunch that well-scrubbed leaders are now playthings of a system that runs them, instead of vice versa.

So William Hague, even with a denim shirt and hollow coconut, may have rather more than a slight charisma shortage working against him as a biographical subject. Remember that, under Margaret Thatcher, both the Tory vote and the public-sector share of GDP stood miraculously still through 11 years of personalised worship and loathing. To find figures who truly change their nation's course, biographers now need to look beyond the spin-doctored, media-driven scene of First World politics.

Nelson Mandela's memoirs (*Long Road to Freedom*) rode high in the bestseller charts for many months. Martin Meredith's imminent life of the South African president should do almost as well. And Mandela's path from prison to power recalls the national liberators – the Bolivars and Garibaldis – whose lives sold by the cartload to Victorian liberals. It also goes to show that any political career really worth reading about may have a downside of suffering and persecution. "Unhappy the land that has no heroes," runs an exchange in Brecht's play *Galileo*. "No," the astronomer replies. "Unhappy the land that has a need of heroes."

Aunt Dot, siren of the Yorkshire Bronx

A Journey Around The Whole Island of Great Britain



WITH PAUL VALLELY

It was not what I remembered. When I was at university I secured a holiday job on the *Pontefract & Castleford Express*. For two months I was given the town of Knottingley to cover. It was my first reporting job. Nothing much happened there. The usual round of golden weddings and house fires was enlivened only by a winter gas escape from the local chemical factory, which had turned the snow pink. What would the little industrial community be like, 20 years on? Might it still be a residuum of the sense of community which has evaporated elsewhere?

Some things were still familiar. There was the sign for the village of Kippax. The area's most prolific newspaper letter-writer, Sam Cheeseborough, had lived there. His typewriter was distinguished by lacking the letter "a", a deficiency he rectified by typing "o" and then drawing a line at its side, except when he was agitated or inebriated, in which case you would receive a missive from Som of Kippox. Then there was the signpost for Goole, an unprepossessing place which one of its councillors once referred to in official session as "the arsehole of the earth": the *Goole Times*, with uncharacteristic gentility, rephrased this in its front-page headline as "Goole: anus of the world".

But memory is a faulty device. Often we recall only snapshot images and then string them together with whatever our imagination can find to hand. Two decades ago I would routinely make calls, in person or by phone, to the police, fire brigade, ambulance, vicar and local hairdresser. It was the hairdresser who provided the only really interesting snippets. But, try as I might, I could not decide which was her salon now.

There was a Salon 5 at the Ferrybridge end of the town. There was an unfamiliar-looking Altered Images. Up by the Pigeon and Pet shop (four different kinds of coloured maggots wriggling in trays, for sale by the pint) there was Aromystique, an aromatherapist who told me she had only just opened and, no, she hadn't been a hairdresser's before.

In a little terrace off Womersley Road I called on Heather Oaksey, who was once a radiographer at the Pontefract General Infirmary and was now, in retirement at the age of 63, a big wheel in the local Labour Party. "You must mean Eithne Green," Mrs Oaksey said. "Eithne Matthewman, her maiden name was. She had a salon down on Racca Green. But she's dead now. Anyway, those were the days when people sat in a row under the dryers, chatting. It's all individual blow-dries now." So there it was, the tonsorial revolution, destroyer of community.

In fact, quite a lot else had altered. All the area's coal mines had closed, save one. And although Croda (solvents and hydrocarbons) and Rockware Glass continued to discharge plumes of smoke into the air, technology had reduced the number of jobs they provided.

Yet something positive had come out of the miners' strike which Margaret Thatcher used as the prologue to shutting down the industry. "Though it sounds daft to say it, a great feeling of community grew up in the miners' strike. And the miners' wives' groups gave the women a sense of their own worth. The Warwick community centre is run by an offshoot of the group; they do English, maths and computers and make boots and shoes there now."

The Warwick estate, known to local taxi drivers as The Bronx because of its drug-dealing and crime rate, is 1,200 houses thrown up 30 years ago to accommodate miners from Scotland and Durham when pits were shut there. Today many of the houses are boarded up. So, too, is the Syd Club (Scotland, Yorkshire and Durham) where Mrs Oaksey worked as a weekend barmaid ("me Aunt Dot used to sing there, too").

But what has survived is the sense of family which held the community together. People may not live as close to their relatives now as they did when Heather Oaksey was a girl. She used to nip across into the furnace room at the glassworks every morning with her grandad's breakfast between two saucers in a red and white kerchief, with a billycan of tea. But though her two daughters don't live in the next street, they are not far off.

"My youngest daughter helps with my garden. She and her kids come here twice a week. And I pick them up from school if she's busy. I still look after me mother, who's local. Auntie Ethel, me dad's sister, cat-sits for me. Me two brothers live in Knottingley and there's another relative in this same terrace. The extended family is still a reality here."

The fact would not have surprised Stanley Ellis, of the Yorkshire Dialect Society, whom I had met earlier in the week. "Academics and media folk generalise from their own experience, like everyone else," he had said. "So they suppose that the population is mobile because the middle class is. But ask your plumber where his mum lives. Most people still live near where they were brought up." Mr Ellis once spent eight years of field work in a different village each week for a mammoth survey of English dialect. Mrs Oaksey's testimony seemed to back him.

We set out for the Knottingley Working Men's Club to give my sample greater statistical respectability. On the way we passed the old town hall, which was now a community centre rather than a place of municipal administration. Mrs Oaksey was a regular there on Tuesdays at the line dancing class.

Now, what kind of metaphor was line dancing for one's sense of community, I wondered. Well, she said, you had no partner, but you did it with other people. It was a kind of compromise, then, between the communal and the individualistic, I suggested. In reply she merely executed a few sprightly steps; she was surprisingly light on her feet for a pensioner of her size.

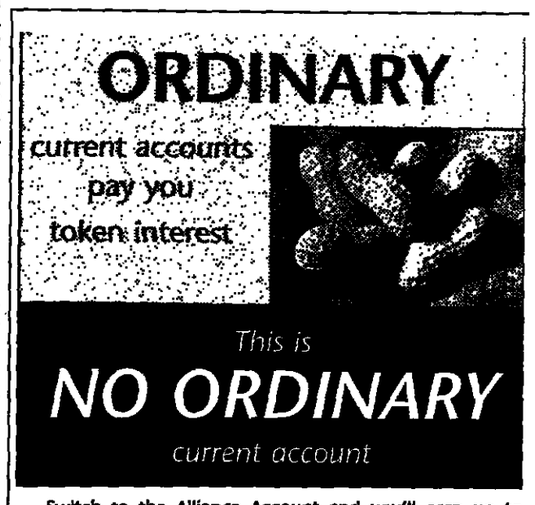
In the club a group of dour-faced men were sat with half-empty pints watching the end of the football. We sat quietly until it finished, whereupon Mrs Oaksey tried repeatedly to engage them in conversation. It was not a men-only bar, but she was the only woman there. The men parried her every opening with dogged truculence. But she was persistent.

Their resistance became a game. "This man's wife was the social services' carer for my mum," she said to me, as if by explanation, at one point.

"Ee, lad, she knows more about thee than tha' duzz thee'sen," one of his friends cried triumphantly. They all laughed, but the man remained monosyllabic.

But then, perhaps, it was not her they were resisting but the unintroduced stranger at her side. Community, after all, is not simply about who you include, but also about who you exclude. I laughed, but I took the hint and left.

Tomorrow: Cambridge.



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Gas-fired power sparks competitors

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

The battle over the future of Britain's coal mines intensified yesterday when it emerged that the Government had received nine more applications to build gas-fired power stations since April, bringing the total number of outstanding applications to 20.

Meanwhile, RJB Mining, the company which bought most of British Coal's deep mines at privatisation in 1994, said the European Commission had launched a full-scale investigation of the so-called "sweetheart" contracts between gas fired stations and regional electricity companies (RECs).

The EC had been considering a complaint by RJB made in April, which was submitted again in a revised form last month to Karel van Miert, the competition commissioner. "Our application has now been accepted for investigation by the Commission," said an RJB spokesman yesterday.

The dispute is over take-or-pay contracts signed by RECs to buy power from gas fired stations. The aim was to secure alternative energy sources to the two main privatised generators, National Power and PowerGen. The deals commit the RECs to buying the power or compensating the generating stations, many of which are joint venture companies.

RJB has claimed the prices paid for gas-fired power are much higher than for coal. The submission to the EC argued the cheapest gas generators charged 2.1p a kilowatt hour, compared with 1.6p for coal. "We've clearly got a raw deal," the spokesman said.

Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, has repeatedly refused to intervene in the contracts on the grounds that they promote competition in the energy market. However, RJB has complained that most gas-fired plants do not compete on price with National Power and PowerGen, because of the complexities of the wholesale electricity market, the Electricity Pool.

The plight of the coal industry has become more urgent with the flood of new applications to build gas-fired stations in the so-called dash for gas. The 20 outstanding applications with the Department of Trade and Industry, listed in a recent Parliamentary answer, together account for 7,300 megawatts of capacity, enough to displace at least five big coal generating stations.

Four of the power station applications were submitted since general election, in a further test of Labour's power policy. They include a large 880 megawatt plant at Anglesey for an independent company, Canatxx Energy Ventures and a 150MW station at Barking.

Five more applications were submitted in April, just before the election, by ScottishPower, National Power, Hydro-Electric and Eastern Group.

Despite repeated words of sympathy for the coal industry, Labour has dismayed RJB by approving three gas-fired power plants since 1 May. The biggest approval by John Battle, industry minister, was for British Petroleum's 1,200MW plant at Saltend near Hull.

Mr Battle has also declined RJB's request for a moratorium on gas-fired approvals until the outcome of a public enquiry into PowerGen's plan to convert another station at Garteosh in Scotland from coal to gas.

Last week Mr Battle came under further pressure when RJB closed Asfordby, the new Leicestershire "super-pit", blaming geological problems. Some industry watchers have warned RJB could have to shut five of its 17 working deep mines when long-term coal contracts with the generators come up for renewal in April.

MCI reveals new $1bn provision

Chris Godsmark

Fresh doubts arose yesterday about the financial health of MCI, British Telecom's US merger partner, after it emerged that the long-distance telephones giant is to take a restructuring charge of up to $1bn (£625m) later this year.

Detailing the renegotiated merger terms to analysts last Friday, Douglas Maine, MCI's finance director, confirmed that "rationalisation measures" were "under consideration". When pressed, Mr Maine said that the anticipated provision would be in the "hundreds of millions, rather than a billion".

The new provisions would be on top of the $800m that MCI is expected to lose on its assault into the local US phone market. These losses, double MCI's previous estimate, stunned BT's shareholders last month and triggered the review of the merger. One of the main concerns of BT's UK investors has been that MCI's ambitions will soak up revenues from its British phone business.

Though MCI had previously made references to a possible restructuring charge in its long-distance business, executives had not suggested a figure. Tim Price, MCI's president, also denied to the press conference that followed the analysts' briefing that the company was planning to cut up to 5,000 jobs.

It would be the second big restructuring charge made by MCI in just two years, coming on top of a mammoth $831m provision in October 1995. Of this $216m was related to reorganisation of sales operations, including 3,000 job cuts, with a $520m to cover write-downs of MCI's assets.

The new restructuring plans follow the sharp slowdown in growth in long-distance revenues, which have been the main driver behind MCI's success. In the second quarter of this year long-distance turnover rose just 4.7 per cent, compared with more than 10 per cent in the same quarter a year ago.

Analysts were also surprised yesterday by details of the revised merger terms, filed unexpectedly quickly with the US Securities and Exchange Commission. They showed BT no longer had the right to back out of the deal or renegotiate further.

In addition, BT had agreed to pay MCI $750m if its shareholders voted against the merger, on top of an existing clause where both sides offered to pay each other $450m should they be forced to pull out under exceptional circumstances. A BT spokesman also said reports from the US that Sir Iain Vallance, chairman, had privately offered to step down if BT shareholders rejected the deal were "completely untrue".

The revelations knocked 22.5p off BT shares yesterday, to 413.5p. The UK group is paying £11.4bn for the 80 per cent of MCI it does not own in a cash and shares offer worth 20 per cent less than the previous deal.

James Dodd, telecommunciations analyst with Dresdner Kleinwort Benson and a leading sceptic about the merger, said the terms remained "potentially disastrous" and urged shareholders to reject the deal. He continued: "We're now in the extraordinary situation where BT has agreed to pay MCI $750m if shareholders disagree with the British management. It's corporate governance gone mad."

However, large BT shareholders seemed relaxed about the new "lock-in" arrangements. "It's a reasonable compromise. The changes are more an issue for MCI than BT," said one.

BT is to create 750 jobs over the next two years at a telemarketing centre in South-west Belfast. The company is investing £9.1m in the site, which will complement call centres recently opened at Warrington, Doncaster and Glasgow. The new call centre was given a grant of £4.5m from the Northern Ireland Industrial Development Board. The jobs will be full and part time, equivalent to 510 full-time jobs. The centre will help BT with its policy of calling all its UK customers four times a year to offer new services. BT has invested £200m in Northern Ireland over the past five years.

Alan Pickles: The uniforms are an attempt to recreate a romantic age where he is cast as the Coco Chanel of transport

Wings of Desire plans to become Aim high-flier

Sameena Ahmad

Wings of Desire, a Mayfair-based chauffeured Bentley and motorcycle company run by two ex-fruit and vegetable traders, is considering a stock market flotation on Aim or the Ofex market in the next 12 months.

The company, which runs a fleet of classic vehicles including soft-topped Bentley Azures, Bentley Brooklands and 1100cc Honda Pan European touring motorcycles, jets and helicopters, was founded three years ago by identical twins Alan and Brian Pickles. They had been running a fruit and vegetable stall in Convent Garden for 13 years.

"As we got older we thought it was about time we had a decent car. We were so in love with Bentleys that we bought one. Then we wanted a matching pair. We soon realised that we had cars with presence which we could use to provide a sense of romance. The Bentley is the last great luxury liner of the road," Alan Pickles said.

Wings of Desire, whose customers include BSkyB, Bloomberg and Sumitomo Bank, is tiny, but growing fast. The company expects to generate £2m of sales in the year to February 1998 and a small profit. Sales last year were £400,000.

The company's expansion plans, which include building on its continental European contracts, should be helped by links with Far and Middle Eastern dignitaries, forged by its third director – Per Svensson, a Dane, who sold sailboats in Singapore for 12 years and whose wife has connections with the Sultan of Brunei.

The group's biggest contract so far, worth around £100,000, was providing 55 vehicles for the state visit to London in June of President Fidel Ramos of the Philippines. The group provides Bentleys to Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed of Malaysia when he visits England and, in a contract worth around £200,000, will supply up to 80 vehicles to the Indonesian, Philippine and Malay embassies at an Asean meeting in London in April next year.

The company is meeting Kingdom Establishment, the investment company owned by Prince Al Waleed, nephew of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and shareholder in CitiCorp and Eurodisney, in the next few months to explore the idea of offering luxury transport to his hotel, the George V in Paris. The Pickles hope to raise £1m in a flotation to expand the group's fleet.

Alan says the group's image – peacock blue Bentleys and chauffeurs and bikers dressed in cravats and trench coats or military "lancer" tunics – is an attempt to recreate a romantic age: "We are the Coco Chanel of the transport business," he said. "We want to give the public some visual enjoyment. Our look is very splendid. There is great visual appeal in uniforms."

The company has about a dozen full time drivers, but employs part-timers including around 60 police officers for state occasions.

Eurocopy shares dive after profits warning

Sameena Ahmad

Eurocopy yesterday became the latest in a long line of photocopier dealers to announce a profits warning. Shares in the company, the last quoted photocopier distributor to operate purely in the UK, almost halved yesterday after it said that profits for the next five years could be hit by competition. The group's share price fell 45 per cent to 32p.

Speaking as the group announced flat half-year profits to March of £2.4m, Cyril Gay, chairman, said that giant photocopier manufacturers like Canon and Sharp had been aggressively cutting prices to recoup market share from large and acquisitive US dealers like Danka.

"We have budgeted to lose 30 per cent of our copy volume over the next three and a half years," said Mr Gay. "The manufacturers are all desperate to win back market share. If we are up against a manufacturer and price is the only thing that matters, we will lose."

But while Mr Gay expects to lose a third of his customers in London and the South, he did not expect the manufacturers to compete on smaller contracts elsewhere where price was not an issue: "To cover the UK properly you need at least nine depots, plus engineers and training courses. There is a lot of overhead in that. A lot of manufacturers will want to stay in London and the South."

As well as switching to smaller customers, Eurocopy is planning to use its £12m spending power on small acquisitions of roughly £1m. The photocopier market in the UK is highly fragmented with over 1,000 private players. "I would be disappointed if I wasn't talking to you about at least two acquisitions before Christmas."

Mr Gay, who with his three daughters owns 30 per cent of the company, said Eurocopy could be a tempting bid target to dealers like UK group Danka or Alco which operate in the US, though he stressed there were no ongoing talks.

"We know both these companies very well. We are the only public company left in the UK. Building up market share by buying small dealerships takes an awfully long time," he said.

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UBS buys Lloyds TSB's stake in SMH for £100m

Tom Stevenson
Financial Editor

Union Bank of Switzerland is paying Lloyds TSB £100m for its 90 per cent interest in Schroeder Muenchmeyer Hengst, the German private investment bank, and buying out the partners who own the rest of the shares. The deal is expected to result in a £40m profit for the British bank.

Lloyds bought its majority holding in SMH in 1984 when it still harboured serious investment banking ambitions on the Continent. Alan Moore, Lloyds TSB's deputy chief executive, said yesterday that the German bank no longer fitted with its successful retail banking-based strategy.

Formed in 1969 from the merger of three German banks, SMH is a substantial fund manager in Germany and also provides a private banking service and corporate finance, broking and equity research to institutional clients.

With 400 employees and capital of DM180bn (£62bn), SMH has recently restructured itself into a pure investment bank. Unlike its high street rivals NatWest and Barclays, Lloyds has shunned the volatile earnings of investment banking, concentrating instead on building up Britain's pre-eminent retail banking operation.

Cementing a deal which had been rumoured for almost a year, and survived one set of collapsed talks, the two banks said the new slimmed-down SMH Bank fitted neatly into the Swiss group – but would retain its own identity.

UBS said of the deal: "The combination of the activities of SMH and UBS will allow UBS to reach its strategic goals – entry to German private banking, expansion of global institutional asset management and of investment fund business – swiftly and efficiently."

Private banking and asset management were the largest contributor to UBS's profits in the first half, contributing 54 per cent of group earnings.

Analysts said the deal made sense, but did not dramatically change their outlook for the Swiss bank.

Madeleine Hofmann at Crédit Suisse First Boston commented: "I don't consider this material to my view of UBS. UBS has for months and years said it wanted to acquire and expand in asset management. It can finance the acquisition from pocket money."

Claudia von Tuerk, equity analyst at Pictet & Cie, said: "It is rather a small acquisition for UBS, but an interesting move toward on-shore banking."

John Leonard, analyst at Salomon Brothers, added: "I view this as essentially a fill-in for UBS with a quality German brokerage house and good corporate relations.

"The price is too small to worry about, it's like a rounding error in estimates. It may have a positive effect of some 5 to 10 million francs on UBS's earnings. But it is not one that will cause me to change my estimates."

Hambro plan to speed up house sales

Andrew Yates

Hambro Countrywide, the UK's largest estate agent, yesterday announced revolutionary plans that should enable house buyers to complete the purchase of a property in less than a week.

The group is investing £500,000 in a conveyancing service which will be open 12 hours a day, seven days a week, and will provide services such as the electronic transfer of local authority searches, which will take hours rather than a week to receive.

Harry Hill, managing director of Hambro Countrywide, which trades under names such as Bairstow Eves and Dixons, said yesterday: "We want to halve the time taken to buy a house by the end of the year and reduce it even further within the next 12 months. An average house takes six weeks to sell. We aim to complete the purchase within six days. In other countries you can buy a house the same day as you see it."

Speeding up house sales will help solve the growing problem of gazumping, where sellers raise the price of a property even though they have already agreed to accept a lower offer. Hambro Countrywide's move comes in the wake of a public outcry over gazumping which led to the Government announcing plans to clamp down on the practice.

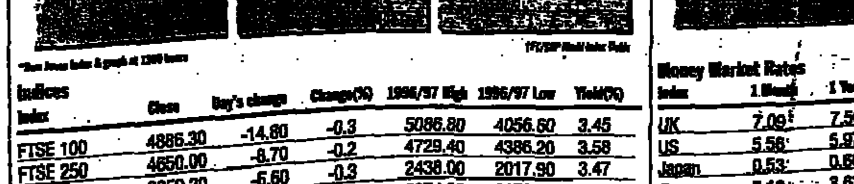
Mr Hill predicted house prices would continue to rise until the end of the millennium: "I can see house prices continuing to increase for at least another three or four years. The housing recovery is not longer confined to the South-east. There has been a very solid performance in places such as the Midlands and the North-west."

Hambro Countrywide has earmarked up to £150m on acquisitions. It is eyeing up targets in the financial services industry.

The company yesterday announced a 130 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £24.2m thanks to a strong performance from its estate agency business. The group revealed it had to put aside £8m to cover claims arising from mis-selling pensions, £1m than originally planned.

Investment column, page 18

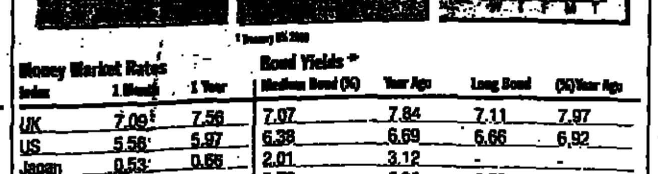
STOCK MARKETS



Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	4886.30	-14.80	-0.3	5086.80	4056.60	3.45
FTSE 250	4650.00	-8.70	-0.2	4729.40	4386.20	3.58
FTSE 350	2359.20	-6.60	-0.3	2438.00	2017.90	3.47
FTSE SmallCap	2253.12	-0.32	-0.0	2374.20	2178.29	3.19
FTSE All-Share	2306.04	-6.07	-0.3	2376.39	1989.78	3.45
New York *	7816.83	-42.74	-0.5	8259.31	5032.94	1.66
Tokyo	18814.98	+158.81	+0.9	20681.07	17303.85	0.83†
Hong Kong	15547.22	-51.66	-0.3	16673.27	12055.17	2.85†
Frankfurt	3959.33	-112.46	-2.8	4438.93	2848.77	1.38†

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES

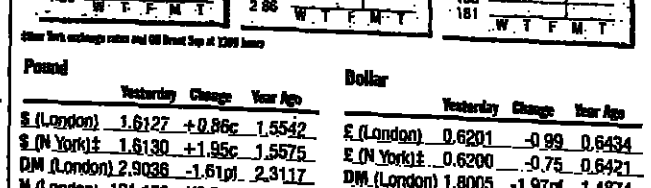


Money Market Rates Index	1 Month	1 Year	Bond Yields* Medium Bond (%)	Year Ago	Long Bond	(%)Year Ago
UK	7.09	7.56	7.07	7.84	7.11	7.97
US	5.56	5.97	6.38	6.69	6.66	6.92
Japan	0.53	0.66	2.01	3.12	-	-
Germany	3.19	3.63	5.70	6.36	6.39	-

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Price (p)	Change (p)	Change%	Falls	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change
Biocompat Int	1157.5	62.5	5.7	British Telecom	413.5	22.5	5.2
BAT Industries	533.5	19.5	3.8	FKI	185	9.5	4.9
Crt Group	248.5	9	3.8	Vaux Group	288.5	12.5	4.2

CURRENCIES



Pound	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
$ (London)	1.6127	+0.86c	1.5542
$ (N York)‡	1.6130	+1.95c	1.5575
DM (London)	2.9036	-1.61pf	2.3117
¥ (London)	191.153	+Y0.832	168.600
£ Index	101.6	-0.1	85.0

Dollar	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
£ (London)	0.6201	-0.99	0.6434
£ (N York)‡	0.6200	-0.75	0.6421
DM (London)	1.8005	-1.97pf	1.4874
¥ (London)	118.530	-Y0.12	108.480
$ Index	105.5	-0.7	95.3

OTHER INDICATORS

	Yesterday	Day's chg	Year Ago
Oil Brent $	17.96	-0.48	20.41
Gold $	325.25	+0.3	387.65
Gold £	201.66	-0.75	249.42

	Index	Yr Chg	Yr Ago	Next Figs
RPI	157.5	+3.3pc	152.4	09 Sep
GDP	112.8	+3.4pc	109.1	24 Oct
Base Rates	7.00pc	-	5.75	-

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COMMENT

'Wall Street bankers generally insist on imposing their own ways and practices on the City. But can anything justify the $750m BT has promised to pay MCI should its own shareholders fail to agree the merger?'

BT poison pill deprives shareholders of their say

Most big mergers in the US carry so-called "break-up fee" clauses, under which each party agrees to pay the other a substantial sum in compensation should for any reason it wish to pull out of the deal. They are also relatively common in mergers between British and US companies. Wall Street bankers generally insist on imposing their own ways and practices on the City. But can anything justify the $750m BT has promised to pay MCI should its own shareholders fail to agree the merger? There was a similar break-up clause in the original merger proposals, but it wasn't quite as bluntly phrased as this one, nor was it nearly as large. The damages that became payable in the original merger agreement were only $150m, rising to $450m in exceptional circumstances.

Upping the ante forms part of the renegotiation of the merger, so BT can reasonably argue that it was just the price that had to be paid for lower terms. MCI was able to say: "You're asking for this big reduction in the price of the deal, but you're going to have to give something in return. If your shareholders cut up rough we want big damages".

There is a possibility they will cut up rough, even though it seems unlikely they will vote against the transaction in significant numbers. As our story opposite explains, things are even worse at MCI than anyone thought. On top of the soaring costs of MCI's assault on the local telecommunications market in the US, MCI is proposing to make extraordinary charges in its next figures running to "hundreds of millions of dollars" against the costs of restructuring its core long-distance business. This goes some way to explaining how BT achieved such a substantial downward revision in the terms. Plainly BT's case for doing so was a rather better one than MCI was letting on.

All of which will further unnerve BT's shareholders as they attempt to decide on the merits or otherwise of this merger. Just in case any of them were thinking of voting against the board, however, BT has now made it that much harder for them to do so by upping the break-up fee to near-prohibitive levels. It has also reduced the level of support it needs in a shareholder vote from 75 to 50 per cent. These things may be common in the US, but they shouldn't be allowed to become an acceptable part of the UK scene. The effect of such a poison pill arrangements is to deprive shareholders of their say over matters where the listing rules require that they have one. This is an unfortunate precedent for BT to have set and it sours what otherwise looked like an impressive piece of renegotiation.

Bundesbank bewitching time is here again

The witches' cauldron of the currency markets has a new ingredient: a pinch of fresh interest rate speculation carefully added by the Bundesbank, stirring hard. This strong brew has, for now, neutralised the old, stale flavour of fear of higher US and UK rates.

There are other things bubbling in the mixture. The big unknown is still the outlook for European monetary union, which could raise its ugly head once again as the month draws to a close and continental politicians return from their holidays. There is a chasm between those in the financial markets who still expect the euro to turn out a weak currency, fudged into existence to avoid delay, and those who think it will be a narrow, strong version.

If the balance tips in favour of the latter, the small but perfectly formed euro, it will send the mark much higher than its present level. The series of crucial EU meetings between now and next spring is a recipe for currency turbulence.

Just as important, however, is the question of how strong a spell the Bundesbank – and to a lesser extent the Bank of England – have cast over international investors. The German central bankers have manipulated expectations that they will raise interest rates, by indicating a switch from a fixed to a variable rate in their repo arrangements and by reverting to a weekly announcement. These actions signal readiness to move if the authorities think it necessary.

Yet if the mark remains at its new levels without them having to act, there is no guarantee that they will. For even with inflation "jumping" to 2 per cent, the German economy is still in a sorry state, and the French economy sorrier still. The last thing the German government wants is for the central bank to provoke the new socialist Government in Paris by tightening monetary policy just as key EMU decisions are due.

Likewise, the Bank of England has indicated that there is scope for a pause in the upward path of UK interest rates, but the length will depend on how the economy behaves – specifically, how much of our windfalls we all spend – between now and Christmas. If there is more boom than bust in the monthly figures for the Anglo-Saxon economies, the present haze over the international currency markets will lift, revealing that the Bundesbank's magic incantations have not really changed anything at all.

Florida lights up tobacco barons' lot

Florida's $11.3bn settlement with the cigarette manufacturers this week is a significant victory for the state, which has a guaranteed payout over 25 years even if the recently negotiated national settlement fails to clear its remaining hurdles. The bigger winner by far, however, is the tobacco industry.

Tobacco executives are rubbing their hands with glee, because the terms of the Florida deal, essentially a mini-version of the landmark $368.5bn national agreement thrashed out earlier this summer, make the larger prize much more likely. A few more agreements along the lines of the national model – a 25-year payment, with restrictions on advertising near schools and on vending machine sales – and it will be difficult to argue the terms are not acceptable to every state. That means the end of damaging class actions and a cap to the industry's health-related liabilities are probable rather than possible. No wonder BAT's shares bucked the falling market yesterday.

The deal is also attractive to Florida. It knows how much it will receive from the agreement and marginally accelerates its receipt of the payment. If the national deal is ratified it will supersede the individual settlement, but Florida has eliminated the risk that it will not be approved by Congress.

That remains a real possibility, with the hard-line anti-smoking lobby still unhappy about several of the deal's clauses. As far as they are concerned the agreement gives the tobacco giants too many let-outs on issues such as reducing nicotine levels and reducing the proportion of under-age smokers. Worse than that, the settlement appears to allow for all but an initial $10bn downpayment to be recouped through higher prices to consumers.

The agreement is not a punishment for the industry but a tax on its addicted customers. Faced with such an attractive clean slate, it is no wonder that top tobacco men are prepared to admit anything, up to and including the link with cancer.

Pound dives on fears of higher rates in Germany

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

The pound fell yesterday to its lowest level on the foreign exchanges since June after the Bundesbank kept investors on tenterhooks about the prospect of an increase in German interest rates. Sterling fell two pfennigs, edging below DM2.90, and analysts said it could weaken further.

Expectations in the currency markets about where the next interest rate rise will take place have undergone a complete reversal, with the German central bank now considered more likely than the Bank of England to be the next to act against the danger of rising inflation.

In its weekly announcement, the Bundesbank left the rate at which it will repurchase securities unchanged at 3 per cent yesterday. But it is widely expected to raise official interest rates before long unless the German currency strengthens further, so the weekly repo was followed by a bout of selling pounds and dollars for marks in thin trading.

If German interest rates do go up, it would be their first increase for nearly six years.

Bronwyn Curtis, an economist at Nomura, said: "The threat of raising rates is more potent than actually doing it, but nevertheless we have to take seriously the fact that the Bundesbank might take action."

The threat was given added force by figures on Monday showing that consumer price inflation in western Germany had climbed to 2 per cent in August from 1.7 per cent the previous month. Inflation in the six months to August, at an annual rate, climbed to 2.3 per cent, suggesting that it is picking up further.

Analysts gave the Bank of England credit for talking down the pound with its statement earlier this month that UK interest rates will stay unchanged for the time being. Trade figures due this morning are expected to reveal damage to exports caused by the pound's climb during the past 18 months.

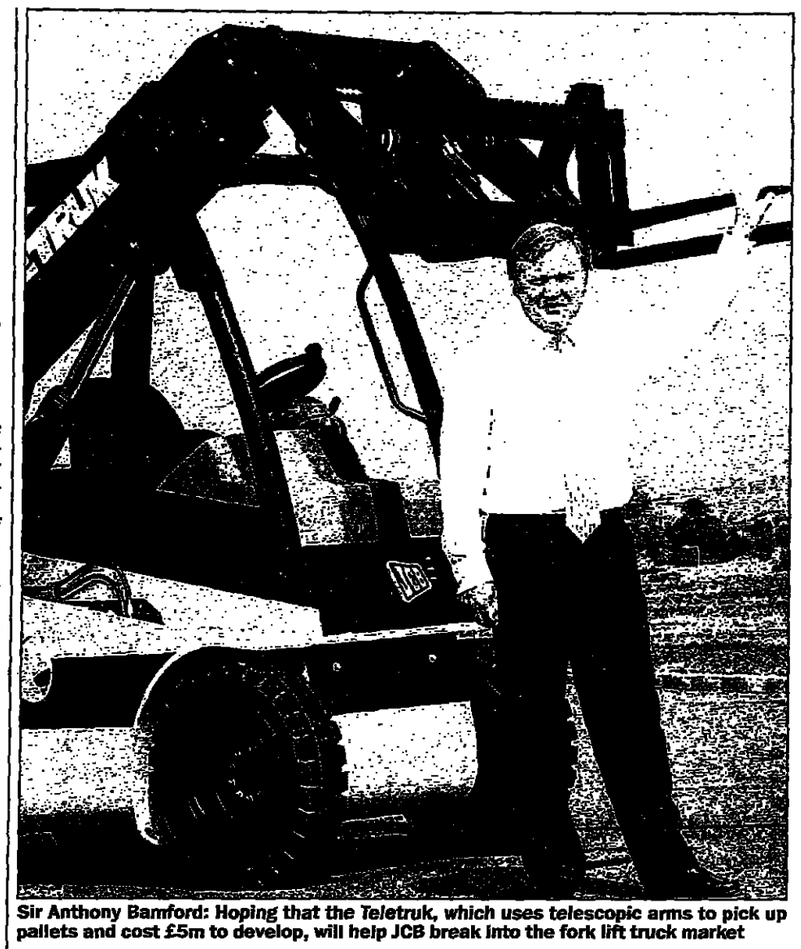
The Bank has successfully trimmed market expectations about how high interest rates will need to rise to keep inflation on target.

A weak dollar has also contributed to the recent decline in the value of sterling. The dollar also lost two pfennigs against the German currency yesterday, falling below DM1.80 to a five-week low.

News of a decline in durable goods orders in the US last month did nothing to support the currency, with the risk of the Federal Reserve raising interest rates still considered remote.

Orders fell by 0.6 per cent in July, although their June increase was revised up to a buoyant 2.9 per cent. The figures have been volatile in recent months, and July's decline was blamed on lower defence sales and a drop in aircraft orders. Even the strike at parcel delivery firm UPS played a part, with many orders not booked until they are shipped and paid for.

Even so, economists said the figures showed the economy was still delivering steady growth with no sign of inflation.



Sir Anthony Bamford: Hoping that the Teletruk, which uses telescopic arms to pick up pallets and cost £5m to develop, will help JCB break into the fork lift truck market

JCB has designs on £6bn

JCB, the privately owned excavator maker, yesterday unveiled an ambitious plan to break into the £6bn world fork lift truck market with a design the company claimed would revolutionise lifting equipment, **writes Chris Godsmark.**

But Sir Anthony Bamford, chairman, admitted that the Teletruk, which uses telescopic arms to pick up pallets, had first emerged on the drawing board 20 years ago. "You could say it's been a long gestation period," he said.

The new vehicle, which will be launched in October, will make JCB the only British-owned maker of lift trucks, following the buyout of famous names like Lancer Boss. JCB said it had shown the design to many potential buyers and several companies had asked to place orders.

Sir Anthony said: "The existing designs haven't changed in 40 years. Our product has the advantage of great visibility and better productivity."

JCB has so far spent around £5m developing the Teletruk, which will be made in its special products factory in Cheadle, Staffordshire. New jobs would be created, although JCB could not say how many.

Ch4 levy to cost Carlton £31m

Cathy Newman

Carlton Communications faces a £31m hit from the loss of the Channel 4 funding formula, which will not be offset by gains from a reduction in its licence fees.

One of the big three ITV owners, along with United News & Media and Granada Group, Carlton will suffer most after the funding formula is phased out, according to a new report from Merrill Lynch.

Although the company, which owns the Carlton, Central and Westcountry franchises, will gain £13.8m from renewing its licences, it stands to lose £31.1m between 1998 and 1999 when the payments from Channel 4 cease. Between now and 2001, Carlton will shed £17.3m from the combined effect of licence renewal and the loss of the Channel 4 revenues.

The funding formula, which came into effect in January 1993, obliges Channel 4 to hand over to ITV half of any advertising revenue it takes over a 14 per cent threshold. ITV has so far received £257m from Channel 4, and will receive a further £85m this year, Merrill says.

The end to the funding formula and the ITV licence renewal will barely affect Granada, while United will come off best, gaining £24.2m. Scottish Media Group will lose out by £7.6m, Merrill adds.

ITV companies are considering proposals from the Independent Television Commission about licence renewal. Each broadcaster's payment to the Treasury varies dramatically under the present system, depending on whether companies had to compete with rival bidders. Scottish Television and Central paid only £2,000 annually because they did not have any competition for their licences. By contrast, HTV contributes £22m each year because of a tough contest against three other contenders.

Coventry determined to remain mutual

Tom Stevenson
Financial Editor

Coventry, Britain's eighth-largest building society, said yesterday it would remain a mutual, despite a wave of conversions by its rivals this year.

It restated its commitment as it announced interim profits that fell sharply thanks to the society's policy of returning cash to its members through better borrowing and savings rates than its peers'.

Martin Ritchley, chief executive, said: "We firmly believe that remaining a building society is in the best long-term interests of our members.

"We are delivering meaningful benefits to savers and borrowers. Our aim is to go on running a successful, efficient and financially strong building society.

"We believe that this tried and tested formula will bring commercial advantage to the society and ongoing benefits to our members."

Pre-tax profits for the period fell to £10.3m from £13.8m in the first half of 1996. The society described the fall as "a planned reduction, reflecting the narrower interest margin which applied for the entire period".

Commenting on the results, Mr Ritchley said: "Our results clearly reflect the commercial advantages of being a building society.

"With no dividends to pay to outside shareholders, we have been able to narrow our interest margin for the benefit of savers and borrowers, whilst maintaining the financial strength of the society for which we are renowned."

Coventry said its net interest margin, which had already been the narrowest of any big building society in 1996 at 1.25 per cent, reduced further to 1.06 per cent in the first half of 1997.

Mr Ritchley added: "As a consequence, we have been able to offer highly competitive interest rates to both savers and borrowers, not only to attract new customers, but also to ensure that we retain our existing customers as well.

"It is hardly surprising therefore that we are growing our business and increasing market share at the expense of our plc competition."

Gross mortgage advances totalled a record £324m, which the society said was significantly ahead of its market share and 23 per cent up on the corresponding figure for 1996. Net lending also increased by an impressive 60 per cent to £157m. Net receipts totalled £54m.

The results included a reduced mortgage provision of £401,000 thanks to the recovery in the housing market.

Growth in assets during the period was almost 6 per cent, which helped push the management expense ratio down to 0.85 per cent.

Martin Ritchley: Delivering benefits to members

Cable firms to drop Sky for BBC

Cathy Newman

The cable industry is threatening to drop Sky News, which is provided by BSkyB, in favour of the BBC's forthcoming 24-hour news service.

Several cable companies, including Telewest Communications, NTL and General Cable, are understood to have held discussions with the BBC about offering subscribers the Corporation's news service in place of Sky News.

Although no agreements have yet been signed, cable companies have long been keen to break Sky's stranglehold on the pay-TV market.

The BBC's 24-hour news service, which launches in the autumn, forms part of its plans to enter the digital age. The BBC has separately signed a joint venture with Flextech, the cable and satellite programmer, which will see the creation of eight pay-TV channels, three of which will be broadcast by Christmas.

The arrival of the BBC's news service will challenge Sky News' claim to be "Europe's first 24-hour dedicated television news channel". Sky News has been on air since 1989.

The move will be seen in the industry as part of a protest against Rupert Murdoch's satellite broadcaster by the cable industry. Cable companies have already clashed this weekend over Sky's attempts to charge more for its sports channels. Sky Sports 2 was previously offered as a free "bonus" to subscribers and cable operators who take the two other sports channels. However, Sky announced recently that Sports 2 would become a premium channel from next month. Customers have to pay an extra £3 each month for premium channels, Sky said.

IN BRIEF

Cathay expected to order 20 more craft

Cathay Pacific Airways is planning to order 20 additional Airbus and Boeing wide-body aircraft as part of a large scale expansion of its international operations, according to the latest edition of *Flight International*, the aviation industry magazine. Cathay declined to comment. "We are always reviewing our aircraft requirement and are in touch with the manufacturers. I can't say more than that," a spokesman said. *Flight* said Cathay is understood to be negotiating orders for seven Boeing 747-400s including one freighter; seven Airbus A340-300s and six A330-300s. The new purchases, along with $2bn worth of existing orders for 13 airliners plus options, would increase Cathay's fleet to 92 aircraft.

Stena reports £42m interim loss

Stena Line, the Swedish-based ferry operator, reported a loss of 535m Swedish kroners (£42m) for the first half of 1997 but said it expected full-year figures to show an improvement. The company would not give a more precise forecast because of the delay in obtaining approval for the merger of its cross-Channel operations with those of P&O, which had increasingly hit its profits.

Liberty Group considers restructuring

The Liberty Group, the South African financial services company which has interests including Liberty Life Association of Africa, is examining a possible restructuring. The group, which also controls Liberty Holdings and First International Trust, said that it anticipates that the evaluation process could take several months.

Saville spends £21m on acquisitions

Saville & Holdsworth, the psychometric testing group, has made two acquisitions for a total of £21.3m. The two companies being bought are Park Human Resources, formerly part of the PA Consulting Group, for which Saville & Holdsworth is paying £14.3m. It is also paying £7m for Aspen Tree Software, a Wyoming-based information technology recruitment company.

Edge sells retail units for £15m

Edge Properties has sold its 123,000 sq ft retail warehouse park in Great Yarmouth to Electricity Supply Nominees for £15.35m cash. The retail park comprises eight retail units and currently produces rental income of £944,000.Edge said it will use the proceeds of the sale to reduce debt by approximately £8.8m and the balance will be transferred to cash reserves.

Rexam considers purchase of Keller

Rexam, which has banked more than £90m from several recent disposals, has signed a non-binding letter of intent relating to the "possible acquisition" of Keller Crescent, a North American manufacturer of healthcare folding cartons. The company said full details of any acquisition would be made available following the completion of due diligence. Keller reported sales of £44m in 1996.

Pru pays £105m for Minerva property

Minerva, the recently floated property group, has sold its 250 Euston Road property to the Prudential Corporation for £105m. The consideration will be settled through £33.3m in cash and the transfer to Minerva of three central London office properties, currently owned by the Prudential and valued at £71.7m.

SAS signs deal with de Havilland

SAS, the Scandinavian airline, has agreed to order 15 de Havilland Dash 8Q Series 400 aircraft worth $350m for its SAS Commuter division, with an option on a further 18. The aircraft are to be manufactured in Toronto by de Havilland's Bombardier Regional Aircraft division. The planes will be used on internal Scandinavian and North European routes.

Gencor profits rise to £400m

Gencor, the South African mining house, reported a net profit of 3.07bn rand (£408m) for the year to the end of June, up from 1.80bn rand a year previously. Most divisions made increased profits but the contribution from steel and ferroalloys more than halved to 127m rand. Chairman Brian Gilbertson said he is confident Gencor and the demerged Billiton, now listed in London will both become important forces in world mining.

London International Group

London International Group has asked us to point out that it has not yet gained US approval for its new polyurethane condom, as implied by our headline in Saturday's edition. It is, however, expected to receive such approval shortly.

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business

Countrywide builds on recovery

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY SAMEENA AHMAD

Anybody struggling to buy a house in London knows that after a long, lean spell estate agents are enjoying the good times again. Hambro Countrywide, the UK's largest agent, is no exception.

Operating profits jumped 80 per cent to £19.5m in the six months to June, ignoring a one-off £4.5m gain arising from Budget tax changes. It sold 44,716 homes, a rise of 16 per cent on 1996, and it should shift well in excess of 90,000 (83,800) properties this year. Summer sales are well ahead of last year, and although the rate of growth of transactions is bound to slow, there is plenty of room for further growth with buyers still scrambling for properties. So far the recovery has been concentrated in the South-east but prices finally appear to be rising throughout the country.

There is also scope to bolster profits by selling more life assurance policies and financial products to customers. Its new, speedy conveyancing service could also turn out to be a big earner.

On fundamentals the shares continue to look cheap, even after rising steeply over the past 18 months. Analysts forecast full-year profits of £52m, putting the stock on a prospective p/e ratio of 10, excluding exceptional profits. Next year pre-tax profits should rise to £70m and the p/e falls to just 7.

The problem is Countrywide's fortunes are inextricably linked to the housing market, even though it is eyeing up acquisitions in financial services in an effort to reduce its dependence on the industry.

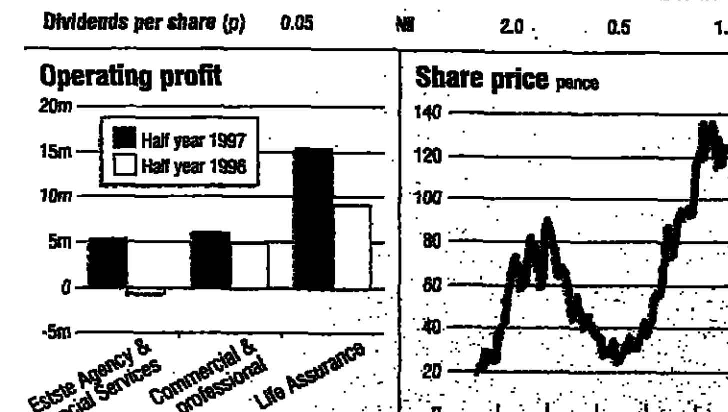
Shareholders could find it difficult to offload stock when the notoriously fickle housing market falters again. Parent Hambros still owns 52 per cent of the company and, given it is currently the bank's biggest earner, it shows no signs of selling the stake. Only about 30 per cent of the shares are freely traded.

Admittedly, the housing market is unlikely to slump for the next few years, with consumer confidence sky high and the number of housing transactions still well off the 1980s peak. But Countrywide is vulnerable to any change in sentiment as its roller-coaster share price chart demonstrates. Investors may be better advised to take a punt on Hambros, where it is much easier to buy and sell shares. If the housing market recovery continues, profits from Countrywide should more than compensate for the continuing underperformance of its troubled banking division.

Hambro Countrywide: At a glance

Market value: £445m, share price 124p

Five-year record	1994	1995 (Full year)	1996 (Full year)	1996 (Half year)	1997 (Half year)
Turnover (£m)	106	151	200.4	91.1	117
Pre-tax profits (£m)	-3.86	-3.89	30.6	10.5	24.2
Earnings per share (p)	-1.83	-2.16	8.42	2.41	9.20
Dividends per share (p)	0.05	Nil	2.0	0.5	1.0



Ailing Eurocopy ripe for a bid

Eurocopy's corker of a profit warning yesterday was long overdue, though the scale of it was sobering. News that the UK photocopier distributor would probably lose almost a third of its copy volume over the next three years as a result of aggressive pricing from manufacturing giants such as Canon and Toshiba left the group's share price down 26p to 32p. Though house broker Panmure Gordon snipped just £500,000 off full-year pre-tax forecasts to £4.5m, it now expects just £2.4m next year compared with a predicted £5.2m and probably around £1.5m in 1999.

That Eurocopy is the last remaining quoted UK distributor is no accident. Photocopier companies operating in the UK have been appalling investments. Beset by allegations of unscrupulous selling practices, culminating in an OFT investigation three years ago, and a string of profit warnings, Erskine House, Southern Business and Gestetner were all taken over. The only star has been Danka, a heavyweight which has wisely steered clear of the UK market. With Alco Standard, Danka is now one of the two most important US photocopier dealers. Even so, the fallout from Eurocopy's warning left Danka shares 30p lower at 740p.

Danka and Alco are at the heart of Eurocopy's problems. With both buying up the dozens of tiny photocopier dealerships around, the big six photocopier manufacturers have been losing market share. This is not just on selling or leasing the machines, where everyone typically makes losses, but the potentially lucrative businesses of consumables – ink, paper and machine parts – and after-sales servicing.

To claw share back, Canon and Sharp in particular have been offering huge discounts on copy prices, typically charging £10 per 250,000 copies versus Eurocopy's £15. Competition has been most severe in the south and London where the manufacturers have offices and where, unfortunately, Eurocopy has most of its high-volume customers.

Cyril Gay, Eurocopy's chairman, admits that against the might of manufacturers such as Sharp, his company has no chance of retaining contracts. Instead what he has to do is find smaller customers further north who care more about service than price. Eurocopy could also raise enough cash, probably around £12m all in, to vacuum up some of the 1,000-odd tiny UK dealers who will also be struggling. That would give the company more critical mass – essential if it is to compete in the high-volume, digital copier market.

However, Mr Gay's biggest hope is that Danka, or even Alco, will take advantage of Eurocopy's share price collapse and launch a bid. Mr Gay, who, with his three daughters, owns 30 per cent of Eurocopy's shares, won't need much persuading to sell up. Without a bid, investors face the prospects of dividend cuts and continuing pressure on the stock price. The group's shares are on a forward p/e ratio of 5 times earnings this year and 10 the next. Ripe for a bid, but on fundamentals, avoid.

Astec plugs into new industries

The market took fright at yesterday's results from Astec (BSR) yesterday. Shares in the Hong Kong-based group, which makes power transformers for personal computers, fell 12.5p to 137.5p after the company reported flat half-year profits.

At first glance the numbers look like a tale of woe. Sales were adversely affected by continued stock reductions in the fiercely competitive PC industry and slower market growth rates in Europe. Margins were dented by the company's push into the volume-based PC power supply business while sales in higher margin high sectors fell.

Currency factors were another blow. Though Astec is a dollar-denominated business, it was hit by profit translation which knocked 6 per cent off the £13m pre-tax figure. Operating profits fell 5 per cent to £12m and sales slumped by 10 per cent to £180m. The litany of grim tidings knocked the shares close to their 12-month low, though they have managed a six-fold increase in the last five years.

But the shares look oversold. For one thing the company was making bullish promises yesterday about a return to double-digit revenue growth. And new chief executive Howard Lance was getting into Sir Clive Thompson's territory when he followed the Rentokil Initial chief executive's pledge to achieve annual earnings growth of over 20 per cent.

At the trading level, the PC market may be a cut-throat business, but Astec is a leading player with a significant market share. While it plans to remain a leader in this volume-driven business it is also branching into new and higher-margin areas like supplying automotive and medical industries.

And though the PC market has been destocking, there are suggestions that this situation is now easing. Sales were weak in the first quarter but have picked up since. Order rates have also improved through the six months to June and the current order backlog is up on last year.

Management is another potential plus. Howard Lance joined as chief executive in April from Emerson Electric, the US power giant which recently increased its stake in Astec to 51 per cent. A bid from Emerson remains possible.

On Dresdner Kleinwort Benson's revised forecast of £35.5m the shares trade on a forward rating of 16. With a re-rating in view, investors should hold on.

A Villin brings some French charm to BZW

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

Alors. **Bill Harrison** has hired **Philippe Villin** to head up BZW in France. Mr Villin, 42, is the archetypal Enarque, a graduate of the élite Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA), the college that grooms France's top businessmen, civil servants and politicians.

Enarques are reckoned to be the cleverest people in France, but recently that most traditional nation has grown disenchanted with them as a group, blaming them for various scandals such as the ballooning bad debts crisis at Crèdit Lyonnais.

Mr Villin is certainly versatile. He has spent 10 years as head of *Le Figaro*, the right-wing establishment newspaper. While there he directed both the editorial content of the paper and ran the business side of the company.

He has also spent time at the French Treasury and at France Telecom. It is obvious that Mr Harrison is hoping Mr Villin will open even the innermost of French doors to BZW. And he's probably right. Enarques are often hired for their connections alone, although this is obviously not the case with Mr Villin.

While at ENA Mr Villin came second in his year as an Inspecteur des Finances, which is not the same thing as a British inspector of taxes. Rather it denotes an élite class of the civil service, a sort of super auditor who will automatically move on to a top job in the Treasury or business.

A BZW spokeswoman finds Mr Villin "utterly, utterly charming".

I suspect, however, that he realises the days of the Enarques are numbered.

As early as 1984 he wrote a book whose ominous title, roughly translated, means *The Waste of the Elites*. Has Mr Harrison read it, I wonder?

Bill Harrison: is hoping to open some closed doors

So it's true, then. The Barclay brothers have bought *Sunday Business*. **Andrew Neil**, editor in chief of European Press Holdings, will build a new publication from scratch, since only the title and various assets were bought from the receivers. The price paid to receiver David Sapte of London law firm Begbies was "a nominal sum," or "very small", according to **Bert Hardy**, chief executive of European Press Holdings.

This really does mark the end of the line for the old paper, which was launched 18 months ago by **Tom Rubython** with much fanfare. It has gone through a hatful of owners and relaunches since. Mr Hardy insists the new paper will be a "greenfield site" with new staff, and without any of the old company's debts. What will happen to the surviving 25 journalists who worked for the old organ is anyone's guess.

The paper's offices in Cavendish Square, just off London's Oxford Street, are also nothing to do with the new regime, which will operate from the *European*'s offices in the ITN building, in Gray's Inn Road.

Mr Neil will recruit 60 journalists who must be "reputable, responsible and authoritative", says Mr Hardy. There will be synergies between the new *Sunday Business* and the financial desks of the company's Scottish newspapers and *The European*.

Meanwhile, Mr Rubython is left in a bit of a pickle. He has offices for his own new business venture, an internet job service, in the old *Sunday Business* office in Cavendish Square. But he no longer owns the lease to the building and may have to leave. No doubt he will land on his feet.

David Bruce, founder of the Firkin pubs, has agreed to join the boards of breweries spread between Paris and Seattle via New York and Denver. Mr Bruce sold his brainchild for cash in 1988 to *Allied Domecq*. Since then Allied has grown the student-orientated Firkin chain to more than 100 pubs.

For the past four years he has been a director of Grosvenor Inns and one of its largest private shareholders. He was heavily involved in the Slug and Lettuce brand, which has grown to 19 bars.

Through his international brewery investment company, Brew Securities, he became a founding shareholder in the *Paris Real Ale Brewery* and has recently joined its board. The two breweries in Paris each produce studenty brews such as Parislytic and Inseine.

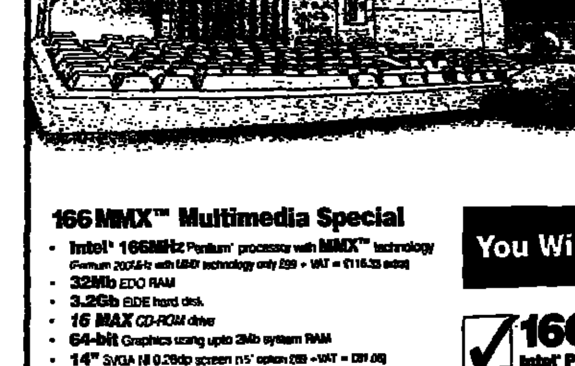
Over the pond in the USA micro-pubs are all the rage, bars where the beer is brewed in-house. Mr Bruce has invested in a number of spots such as the Brew Moon in *Boston* and the *Wynkoop* Brewery in Denver. He is on the board of the latter as well.

The trainspotters in the City are looking forward to next week when the *Economist* publishes its annual "Pocket World in Figures", a store of facts and figures guaranteed to clear a room in seconds.

Stun your friends with the news that the UK has the world's fifth-largest economy, though for GDP per head is ranked only 22nd. Impress colleagues by slipping into the conversation the fact that Serbia's average annual inflation for the years 1989-96 was 1,643,638 per cent.

Or how about this? The fastest-growing stock market over the decade from 1986 was Indonesia's. Its market capitalisation grew by 82,104 per cent. Now where's my broker's number ...

John Willcock



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Poor apple harvest squeezes cider makers

Andrew Yates

Merrydown, the Sussex-based cider maker, faces mounting problems in its attempt to overcome a recent slump in profits following news yesterday that this summer's English apple harvest would be the worst for more than 60 years.

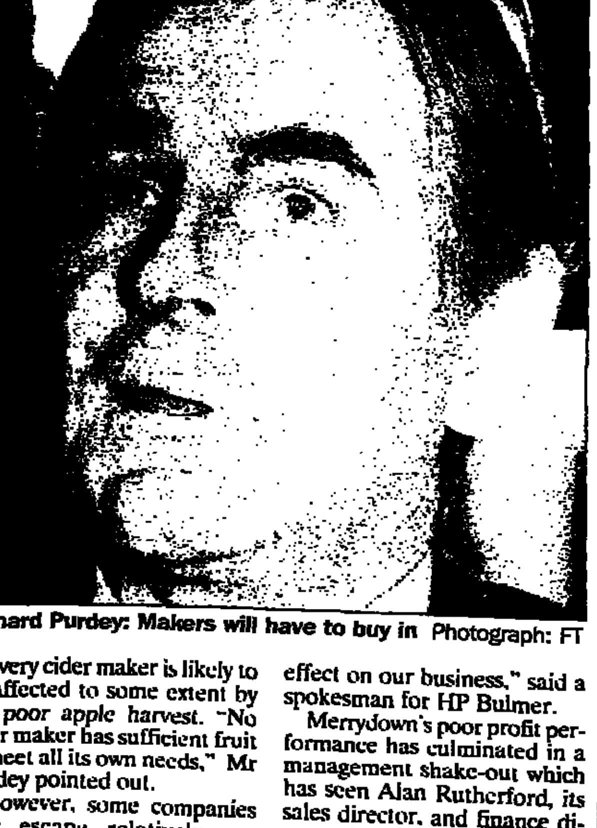
Poor domestic apple crops mean Merrydown, along with other cider makers, will be forced to buy concentrated apple juice from continental Europe to meet production targets. Analysts believe this could prove very costly as rising demand for concentrate could push prices up sharply.

One analyst said yesterday: "This is bad news for cider makers who will be forced to bid for apple concentrate on the spot market. Merrydown is likely to be particularly badly affected."

Richard Purdey, Merrydown's chairman, attempted to play down the impact of the dire apple harvest but admitted it could have an effect. "We will not know the full impact until November. Until the apples have been processed we will not know how much concentrate we will have to buy."

Matthew Clark, another struggling cider producer, is also particularly vulnerable to a rise in the price of concentrates. "Taunton Cider [a subsidiary] suffered badly from a rise in concentrate prices a few years ago and still buys more than its fair share of concentrate," one leading drinks analyst said yesterday.

Any rise in costs will come as a big blow to Matthew Clark, which has seen its shares collapse after a profits warning last year, and which has been forced to launch a multi-million pound marketing campaign to try to boost sales.



Richard Purdey: Makers will have to buy in Photograph: FT

Every cider maker is likely to be affected to some extent by the poor apple harvest. "No cider maker has sufficient fruit to meet all its own needs," Mr Purdey pointed out.

However, some companies may escape relatively unscathed. HP Bulmer, the world's largest cider maker, grows most of its own apples in orchards spanning thousands of acres throughout the West Country. These orchards have escaped most of the bad weather and frosts which decimated crops in Kent and the South-east. "Our orchards in the Hereford, the Midlands and the West have not been hit by the frosts around the South-east. This will not have a significant effect on our business," said a spokesman for HP Bulmer.

Merrydown's poor profit performance has culminated in a management shake-out which has seen Alan Rutherford, its sales director, and finance director Stephen Burke leave the group in the last few months. Sales of Two Dogs, its alcoholic lemonade, plummeted as dozens of rivals entered the market, forcing Merrydown to give brewing giant Scottish and Newcastle the contract to distribute the drink in a desperate attempt to reverse its flagging performance.

Experts believe that about 50 per cent of the apple harvest is likely to have been wiped out by poor weather this year.

Company Results

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Anglo Eastern Plantations (I)	6.48m (5.91m)	3.35m (3.52m)	4.2p (5.1p)	nil (nil)
Astec (BSR) (I)	179.4m (199.1m)	12.98m (13.09m)	3.22p (3.32p)	0.63p (0.63p)
Clydeport (I)	10.44m (9.02m)	4.18m (2.83m)	10.13p (6.85p)	1.725p (1.5p)
Eclipse Blinds (I)	22.63m (18.72m)	2.93m (2.46m)	4.06p (3.84p)	1.20p
Hambro Countrywide (I)	116.54m (91.1m)	24.2m (10.5m)	9.2p (2.41p)	1.0p (0.5p)
John Mansfield Grp (I)	6.41m (5.46m)	130,000 (123,000)	15p (15p)	nil
Sanderson Bramall Motor Group (I)	319.8m (319.2m)	6.73m (6.13m)	13.25p (12.18p)	1.84p (1.6p)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim (N) - Nine months

Bramall silent on Appleyard

Clifford German

Sanderson Bramall, the Harrogate-based motor dealer, yesterday attempted to focus investors' minds on its latest financial results and away from the persistent rumours that it was the mystery bidder for the rival Appleyard group, which last week announced that takeover talks had collapsed.

Firmly declining to comment about Appleyard, the company announced that taxable profits had risen by 10 per cent to £6.7m on unchanged turnover of £320m for the six months to the end of June. The interim dividend has been increased from 1.6p to 1.84p and the shares rose 3p to 223.5p.

The figures are a stark contrast to those reported last week by Appleyard. They showed a 16 per cent drop in profits to £3.88m, including profits on disposals, a 3 per cent drop in turnover to £380m for the same period, and a cut in the interim dividend.

Analysts now expect Bramall to make £14m of profits this year, and predict that Appleyard will struggle to make £6m.

The best performance in the first half at Sanderson Bramall came from the new and used cars division. The division's contribution to profits rose by 16 per cent, and generated 60 per cent of total returns.

New car sales were up around 5 per cent in line with the market and August should have been one of the best months on record chairman, Tony Bramall said yesterday. Brammall has eight Ford, four Vauxhall and two Rover dealerships.

Truck sales fell 2 per cent in a market down 17 per cent, but profits rose 4 per cent. The car rental division has been affected by the lower residual values obtained for ex-rental cars. The strength of sterling has impacted adversely on its portfolio of luxury dealerships including BMW, Mercedes, Audi and Lexus, which are all imported.

Capital expenditure is set to reach £5m this year, including three new dealerships and a site refurbishment, compared with just under £4m spent in 1996. Gearing, though, has halved to 21.6 per cent in the last 12 months.

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الأصل

Data Bank

FTSE 100 [illegible] -14.8
FTSE 250 [illegible] -8.7
FTSE 350 [illegible] -6.6
SEAQ VOLUME [illegible] shares, [illegible] bargains
Gilts Index [illegible] +0.03

Share spotlight

Buy-back speculation starts utilities' summer surge

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

Will utilities again enjoy what is regarded as their traditional late-summer run? There are faint signs electricity and water shares are beginning to anticipate action ahead of their interim profits season.

Many utilities start disclosing their figures in October.

In the preceding close season, when reporting companies feel obliged not to talk to the stock market, it is not difficult for the more determined speculator to get some intriguing stories flowing.

Kevin Lapwood at stockbroker MeesPierson would not be surprised if, in the next few weeks, there is a rush of share buy-back and takeover rumours. "It has happened before and I can't see things being different this time round."

Many utilities are sufficiently well endowed to consider returning some value to shareholders, either through a buy-back or *special dividend*.

Even **BG**, the old British Gas, which once seemed to spend much of its time pleading poverty, is regarded as a buy-back candidate with some thinking in terms of around £1bn being earmarked.

With a Labour Government it is clearly in the utilities interests not to have too much surplus cash slurping around their systems. Far better then to gear up and hand any unwanted money to shareholders.

ScottishPower, up 10.5p to 438p, led the advance with the English generator **National Power** enjoying the additional glow of regulator Professor Stephen Littlechild's about-turn over prices with a 5.5p rise to 541.5p.

Among water shares **Anglian** rose 3p to 772.5p; **Severn Trent** 6p to 854.5p and **South West Water** 10.5p to 790.5p.

The rest of the market managed, just about, to go through the motions of a day's trading.

Again attendance was patchy with the tail end of the holiday season and the August Bank Holiday taking their toll.

Trading was moderate with once more **BT** attracting a significant slice of the action as distressed arbitrageurs continued to seek sanctuary. BT fell 22.5p (after 29.5p) to 413.5p, the biggest fall of any blue chip.

Footsie started on a firm note, helped by a Dresdner Kleinwort Benson forecast it would be above 5,000 points at Christmas. Then worries about the market's and Wall Street's recent volatility eroded confidence and shares gave ground. Still, blue chips, helped by firm gilts, finished comfortably above the day's low point, reducing a 49.2 deficit to 14.8 by the close.

Worries linger about the direction of interest rates. Many fear Germany will lift rates next month, which could draw funds away from London although, of course, the argument the market is cheap in relation to continental markets would remain in place.

BAT Industries, despite the $11.3bn Florida settlement, led the blue-chip leader board with a 19.5p gain to 533.5p. Société Générale Strauss Turnbull regard the shares as a buy. The Florida deal is seen as a local enactment of the broader $368.5bn proposed national settlement.

Vaux, strong last week on talk of corporate activity, fell 12.5p to 288.5p as DKB said sell. The investment house suggested the progress had left the price "unsustainable". The £48m sale of its 38 nursing homes and five three-star hotels was not such a good deal as many had expected. And analyst Andrew Holland believes speculation that management changes could lead to a demerger of the brewing and hotel operations was unjustified.

WH Smith, figures today, fell 11p to 367.5p and **Dixons** suffered from profit taking, off 10p to 654p.

Eurocopy, the office equipment group, slumped 26p to 32p on a profits warning and **Astec** (BSR) fell 22.5p to 137p.5p following disappointing results.

Little property group **Delyn** held at 97.5p. The hostile bid from Newport is doomed with shareholders accounting for 55.97 per cent of the capital supporting the board's rejection.

Pan Andean Resources, raising £482,000 by placing shares at 36p, rose 4.5p to 48.5p.

Biocompatibles International, the healthcare group, recovered 62.5p to 1,157.5p on talks its long-awaited deal with the US giant Johnson & Johnson is at last nearing completion.

The group is involved, it is thought, in wide ranging talks with J&J. It was originally said that the American group was negotiating to use Biocompatibles "stents", valves which free blocked arteries.

The talks should have been completed in June, prompting the shares to weaken from around 1,400p. However it is thought the negotiations have dragged on because other Biocompatibles products have interested J&J which has a stake in the company.

Taking Stock

❑ **Style Holdings, a men's wear retailer, made a smart market debut. The shares arrived on AIM following an introduction by stockbroker Shore Capital & Corporate; they closed at 83.5p. The company runs 124 concessions in men's wear stores but intends to spend much of its time developing its 12-strong chain of Envy shops. Mercury Asset Management, an early backer, has retained a 17 per cent interest, down from 28 per cent.**

❑ **Another possible shell: Hansom, the hard-pressed taxi business, intends to sell its remaining operations, its radio taxis and its taxi fleet. It sees itself becoming a vehicle for a bigger operation seeking a quote. The shares have been a disastrous investment. Floated on AIM at 60p two years ago they managed a 0.5p ride to 6.75p.**

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.
Other details: r Ex rights x Ex-dividend a Ex all u Unlisted Securities Market s Suspended pp Partly Paid pm Nil Paid Shares. ‡ AIM Stock   Source: FT Information

The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0891 123 335, and when prompted to do, so enter the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 1233 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

FTSE 100 – Real-time	00	Sterling Rates	04	Privatisation Issues	38
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Anyone with a tone-dial telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of The Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0891 123 333. For assistance, call our helpline 0171 873 4378 (9.00am - 5.00pm).

Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000
BT	3480000	Scottish & New.	1090000	NatWest Bank	580000	Rentokil Initial	510000
Shell Transport	3480000	Centrica	930000	Grand Met.	530000	Cookson	480000
BTR	2520000	BAT Inds	910000	Lloyds TSB	530000	Royal & Sun Alce	470000
British Steel	1380000	SmKl Beecham	630000	BG	520000	ASDA Group	460000
Vodafone	1250000	Norwich Union	610000	Cable & Wire	510000	Hanson	460000

FTSE 100 Index hour by hour

Open 4910.8 up 9.5	11.00 4867.9 down 33.2	14.00 4860.0 down 41.1
09.00 4922.2 up 21.1	12.00 4851.9 down 49.2	15.00 4865.4 down 35.7
10.00 4857.4 down 43.7	13.00 4861.3 down 39.8	16.00 4881.6 down 19.5
		Close 4886.3 down 14.8

Share price listings

1997 High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E | Index Code

Alcoholic Beverages; Banks, Merchant; Banks, Retail; Breweries, Pubs & Rest; Building/Construction; Building Materials; Chemicals; Distributors; Diversified Industrials; Electricity; Electronics; Engineering; Engineering Vehicles; Extractive Industries; Food Manufacturers; Gas Distribution; Health Care; Household Goods; Insurance; Internationals; Investment Companies; Investment Trusts; Leisure & Hotels; Life Assurance; Media; Oil Exploration; Oil, Integrated; Other Financial; Pharmaceuticals; Printing & Paper; Property; Retailers, Food; Retailers, General; Support Services; Telecommunications; Textiles & Apparel; Tobaccos; Transport; Water

[illegible]

HOW CAN I MAKE the most of my savings and investments?

TURN TO *Travel and Money*

Government Securities

1997 High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Red Yld | Index Code

Index-linked; Undated; Shorts; Mediums; Longs

[illegible]

Rights Issues

Stock	Price	Chg
Dixon Motors	[illegible]pm	+2½
Golden Land	2pm	
Lopex	[illegible]pm	
Pendragon	2pm	

Recent Issues

Stock | Price | Chg

[illegible]

unit trusts

Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

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UNIT TRUST GUIDE

d	ex dividend
e	exit charge applies when units are sold
buy	formerly 'offer'
sell	formerly 'bid'
x	Non SIB recognised funds

Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	DOLLAR Spot	1 month	3 months	D-MARK Spot
US	1.6127	23-21	63-60	1.000	–	–	0.5554
Canada	2.2469	71-66	209-201	1.3933	32-31	89-88	0.7738
Germany	2.9036	97-90	289-278	1.8005	38-38	117-118	1.0000
France	9.7863	340-320	920-880	6.0695	118-115	358-348	3.3711
Italy	2834.2	0.2-1.4	1.6-0.7	1757.4	17.4-17.9	48.5-49.0	976 117
Japan	191.15	104-100	307-302	118.53	52-51	152-151	65.8335
ECU	1.4788	35-31	108-101	1.0906	14-15	46-47	0.5093
Belgium	59.981	21-15	59-51	37.193	7.8-7.4	22.9-22.4	20.6576
Denmark	11.092	340-290	1010-900	6.8593	119-115	365-355	3.8098
Netherlands	3.2705	106-98	319-304	2.0280	43-42	128-127	1.1264
Ireland	1.0879	8-2	22-16	1.4824	8-7	18-16	0.3747
Norway	12.102	380-290	890-860	7.5040	147-142	430-419	4.1678
Spain	245.66	37-26	116-97	152.32	5-4	23-21	84.6038
Sweden	12.734	310-240	920-800	7.8964	93-88	289-279	4.3858
Switzerland	2.4016	114-105	342-328	1.4892	54-53	161-159	0.8271
Australia*	2.1588	39-34	125-116	1.3386	7-5	25-23	0.7435
Hong Kong	12.487	18-2	103-46	7.7430	5-6	13-15	4.3006
Malaysia	4.4954	34-51	102-143	2.7875	40-60	125-145	1.5482
New Zealand*	2.4582	28-36	63-77	1.5481	7-9	31-33	0.8604
Saudi Arabia	6.0486	37-33	129-116	3.7505	6-8	15-19	2.0831
Singapore	2.4094	49-44	153-141	1.4940	19-16	58-53	0.8298

OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	1.6139	0.9998	Nigeria	132.444	82.1000
Austria	20.4334	12.6708	Oman	0.6211	0.3850
Brazil	1.7624	1.0925	Pakistan	65.3015	40.4795
China	13.3718	8.2890	Philippines	48.3637	29.9800
Egypt	5.4807	3.3995	Portugal	294.753	182.770
Finland	8.7143	5.4019	Qatar	5.8689	3.6409
Ghana	3629.70	2250.00	Russia	9411.41	5834.00
Greece	457.375	283.520	South Africa	7.5724	4.6940
India	58.6620	36.3750	Taiwan	46.3634	28.7400
Kuwait	0.4919	0.3049	UAE	5.9254	3.6731

Note: Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount (subtract from spot rate); those quoted low to high are at a premium (add to spot rate). *Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals. For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 123 3033. Calls cost 50p per minute (daily rate) 45p other times.

Tourist Rates

£ Buys		£ Buys		£ Buys	
Australia(Dollars)	2.0650	France(Francs)	9.5415	New Zealand(Dollars)	2.4075
Austria(Schillings)	19.9500	Germany(Marks)	2.8350	Norway(Kroner)	11.8525
Belgium(Francs)	58.5600	Greece(Drachma)	447.7500	Portugal(Escudos)	286.9000
Canada(Dollars)	2.1600	Hong Kong(Dollars)	11.9600	Spain(Pesetas)	238.2500
Cyprus(Pounds)	0.8325	Ireland(Punts)	1.0650	Sweden(Kronor)	12.4575
Denmark(Kroner)	10.8760	Italy(Lira)	2786.0000	Switzerland(Francs)	2.3390
Holland(Guilders)	3.1825	Japan(Yen)	182.5000	Turkey(Lira)	254870.0000
Finland(Marks)	8.5680	Malta(Lira)	0.6170	United States(Dollars)	1.5550

Interest Rates

UK		Germany		US		Japan	
Base	7.00%	Discount	2.50%	Prime	8.50%	Discount	0.50%
France		Lombard	4.50%	Discount	5.00%	Belgium	
Intervention	3.10%	Canada		Fed Funds	5.50%	Discount	2.50%
Italy		Prime	4.75%	Spain		Central	3.00%
Discount	6.25%	Discount	2.98%	10-Day Repo	5.25%	Switzerland	
Netherlands		Denmark		Sweden		Discount	1.00%
Advances	3.00%	Discount	3.25%	Repo (Ave)	4.10%	Lombard	na %

Bond Yields

Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %	Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %
UK	7.00%	7.08	7.25%	7.08	Netherlands	6.25%	4.98	5.75%	5.62
US	6.63%	6.28	6.25%	6.38	Spain	7.90%	5.59	7.35%	6.31
Japan	5.50%	1.20	2.90%	2.13	Italy	6.25%	6.31	6.75%	6.69
Australia	10.00%	6.27	6.75%	6.73	Belgium	6.0%	4.92	6.25%	5.77
Germany	8.00%	4.98	6.00%	5.68	Sweden	13.0%	5.70	6.50%	6.59
France	4.75%	4.78	5.50%	5.60	ECU OAT	8.00%	5.18	5.50%	5.90

Source: HSBC Markets Research. Yields calculated on local basis. ** Denotes new benchmark

Money Market Rates

	O'Night		7 Day		1 Month		3 Months		6 Months		1 Year	
Interbank	6½	7¼	7¼	7¼	7⅛	7⅛	7⅝	7⅛	7⅜	7⅜	7½	7⅝
Sterling CDs					6¾		6⅝		7⅛		7⅞	
Local Authority Deps	6⅝		6⅞		6¾		6⅞		7⅛		7⅛	
Discount Market Deps	6⅞		6⅞									
Treasury Bills (Buy)	-		-		6⅞		6⅞					
Dollar CDs	-		-		5.42		5.47		5.55		5.70	
ECU Linked Dep	-	-	-	-	4¼	4	4¾	4⅛	4¼	4⅛	4⅞	4⅞

Liffe Financial Futures

Contract		Settlement price	High/Low for day		EstConts traded	Open Interest
Long Gilt	(Sep 97)	114-14	114-15	114-01	70925	141946
German Gvt Bd	(Sep 97)	102.15	102.20	101.75	192075	251510
Italian Bond	(Sep 97)	135.64	135.99	135.16	52983	92606
Japan Gvt Bd	(Sep 97)	127.66	127.69	127.54	4022	n/a
3 Mth Sterling	(Sep 97)	92.70	92.71	92.68	2987	110462
	(Dec 97)	92.54	92.55	92.51	14368	127208
3 Mth Euromark	(Oct 97)	96.55			0	1903
	(Dec 97)	96.40	96.43	96.36	44962	292779
3 Mth Eurolira	(Sep 97)	93.26	93.30	93.22	13283	97474
	(Dec 97)	93.57	93.64	93.51	24350	98511
3 Mth Euroyen	(Dec 97)	99.42			0	n/a
3 Mth Euroswiss	(Sep 97)	98.43	98.46	98.40	10193	63719
	(Dec 97)	98.14	98.18	98.09	11527	54978
3 Mth ECU	(Sep 97)	95.60	95.61	95.58	394	9833
	(Dec 97)	95.47	95.51	95.45	870	10016
FTSE 100	(Sep 97)	4907.0	4945.0	4830.0	9393	69448
FTSE 250	(Sep 97)	4712.0			0	8103

Liffe FTSE 100 Index Option as at 26/8/97

Settlement price: 4903	closing offer price				Call/Put
Series	4850	4900	4950	5000	Total/vols
Sep	140/86	109/109	83/136	61/167	-
Oct	192/125	162/148	134/172	112/203	-
Nov	244/156	214/177	184/199	162/228	-
Dec	290/178	257/198	225/221	202/249	110/161

Commodities

INDUSTRIAL METALS - London Metal Exchange

$/tonne	Cash	3 mths	Volume	LME Stocks		chg
Aluminium HG	1780.0-85.0	1858.0-60.0	113818	681700	+	3200
Aluminium Alloy	1480.0-70.0	1480.0-95.0	1188	54300	-	140
Copper A	2213.0-16.0	2194.0-95.0	42688	273100	+	525
Lead	628.50-9.50	638.0-9.0	5840	117875	-	225
Nickel	6545-6555	6640-6650	26274	58890	-	54
Tin	5420-5430	5465-5470	4858	380775	-	725
Zinc	1885.0-88.0	1488.0-90.0	17734	10775	-	25

Stock volumes & change in tonnes as at Tue 26 Aug

PRECIOUS METALS

per fix /oz	$	£	Coins	$	£		$	£
Platinum	406.00	251.40	Britannia	355	220	Krugrands	326/340	202/211
Palladium	197.00	122.00	Britannia.5 oz	197	122	Sovs	76/85	47/53
Silver spot	4.07	2.83	Britannia.25 oz	90	56	Nobles	400/416	248/258
Gold Bulln	325.50	201.92	Britannia.10 oz	39	24	Maple Leaf	331/355	205/220

Source: Spink & Son

AGRICULTURAL

Cocoa		Coffee		Barley		Potatoes		Potatoes	
LIFFE	£/tonne	LIFFE	$/tonne	LIFFE	£/tonne	LIFFE	£/tonne	ATA	Gld/100kg
Sep	1085	Sep	1512	Sep	79.40	Nov	62.00	Vol.	-
Dec	1115	Nov	1540	Nov	82.15	Mar	101.00	Nov	-
Mar	1130	Jan	1540	Jan	84.25	Apr	117.00	Apr	24.40
Vol	5172	Vol.	7417	Vol:	109	Vol:	145	Vol:	380

White Sugar		Freight		Wheat		Corn		
LIFFE	$/tonne	LIFFE $10/index pt		LIFFE	£/tonne	CBOT#	Hi-Lo	Settl
Oct	327.10	Aug	1315	Sep	88.75			
Dec	324.50	Sep	1440	Nov	89.00	Sep	289.50-288.75	288.75
Mar	326.30	Vol.	1540	Jan	91.00	Dec	274.00-272.75	273.75
Vol	2756	Index	1307	Vol	163	Mar	282.50-281.60	281.50

Source: CMS

Other Softs (Agricultural)

unq	Maize (No.3)**	$/tonne	unq	Sep/Oct	Soya Oils	FL/100kg	110.0
Sep	Copra (†)	$/tonne	109.00	Aug/Sep	Coconut Oil (†)	$/tonne	570.00
Oct	Cotton (NY)	UScents/lb	73.10	unq	Sunflower Oils	$/tonne	unq
unq	Wool	Acent/kg	unq	Sep	Rapeseed Oils	FL/100kg	107.00
Aug	Rubber*	Mcent/kg	253.50	Aug/Sep	Groundnut Oil	$/tonne	1085.0

Origin: ‡Dutch/EC - carry origin - †Philippines/Indonesia *Malaysia **N Europe Source: FT Information/Reuters

ENERGY

Brent Crude	($/barrel)			Gasoil	($/tonne)		WTI	Products †	($/tonne)
IPE	5.30pm	*chg	Yr ago	IPE	close	*chg		6pm Spot CIF North West Europe	
Oct	18.26	-0.30		Sep	163.00	-3.50	Oct 19.35	Prem.Unleaded	225/229
Nov	18.39	-0.30		Oct	165.25	-3.50	Nov 19.50	Naphtha	188/190
Dec	18.52	-0.28		Nov	167.25	-3.50	Dec 19.60	EC Gasoil	162/163
Vol:	33387	Index	18.65	Vol:	20037		Jan 19.65	Fuel Oil	92/95

*since 5.30pm previous day. Year ago prices show average for week. Source. ICIS-London Oil Reports 18pm prices

COMMODITY INDICES

*GSCI Indices	Base date	+Spot	%Day Chg	Dec 31st	%Yrtodtchg	Year ago	% Yr chg
Index	1970=100	191.03	-1.02	215.26	-11.25	199.49	-4.24
Agricultural	1970=100	239.72	-0.53	231.23	+3.41	266.63	-10.99
Energy	1983=100	66.83	-1.52	85.86	-19.83	70.71	-2.66
Indust'l Metals	1977=100	182.83	0.00	168.76	+8.31	163.21	+12.02
Livestock	1970=100	190.12	-0.24	191.03	-0.48	198.50	-4.22
Precious Metals	1973=100	421.13	-0.60	493.54	-8.15	495.76	-15.05

Source: Goldman, Sachs & Co *GSCI is a trademark and servicemark of Goldman, Sachs & Co. †Close as of 25 Aug 97

100 Largest Insurance Funds

Stock	Bid	Mid	Offer
Abbey Equity Ser 4	307.5		323.7
Abbey International Ser 4	245.6		258.6
Abbey Managed Ser 4	875.7		921.8
Abbey National Managed	160.4		168.9
Abbey National UK Equity	174.0		183.2
Albany Equity Acc Ser 3	2169.5		2282.8
Albany Multiple Inv Acc S3	1355.2		1428.5
Allied Dunbar Distribution Bond	27.30		28.80
Allied Dunbar Equity Acc	1957.9		2065.2
Allied Dunbar Gen 4 High Income Ser	245.40		47.80
Allied Dunbar Managed Acc	1472.9		1550.5
Allied Dunbar Property Acc	706.80		744.20
AXA Equity & Law Bal Ser 6	972.30		1023.40
AXA Equity & Law Dist Ser 6	108.50		114.20
AXA Equity & Law HI Inc Ser 6	1482.20		1560.20
AXA Equity & Law UK Eq Ser 6	1458.60		1535.30
Barclays Equity Acc	1257.3		1322.5
Barclays International Acc	513.0		540.0
Barclays Managed Acc	719.1		757.0
Black Horse Income Fund Ser 2	1047.59		1102.73
Black Horse Mngd Inv S2	634.86		668.28
Canada Managed Ser 2	934.20		983.40
CM/Fd Equity	458.5		482.7
CM/Fd Sapphire/Mixed	382.3		402.5
CM With Profits Bond	113.9		113.9
Confederation Equity 1	2462.4		2592.0
Commercial Union Managed	536.9		564.6
Commercial Union UK Equity	705.1		742.3
Commercial Union With Profit	142.5		150.0
Eagle Star Managed 2	213.4		224.7
Family Performance	184.82		194.55
Friends Provident Managed	422.4		444.7
Friends Provident UK Equity	585.6		616.5
Friends Provident With Profit	217.5		229.0
General Accident With Profit	165.6		174.4
GA Prov Mutual Eq Ord	1047.9		1103.1
GA Prov Mutual Mgd Ord	640.1		673.8
Gan Managed	385.4		405.8
GRE Equity Acc	1470.8		1548.3
GRE International Acc	838.4		882.6
GRE Managed Acc	906.1		953.8
Hill Samuel Equity	852.3		902.0
Hill Samuel Managed Ser A	735.2		774.9
Irish Life Global Mgd Prime Ser 3	777.8		818.5
J Rothschild/SJ Place Mgd	208.3		219.3
Laurentian Imperial UK Mgd Acc	358.6		377.5
Laurentian Managed Acc Ser 3	702.0		738.8
Laurentian UK Equity Acc	647.8		681.8
Legal & General Equity Acc	1681.8		1770.4
Legal & General International Acc	683.6		719.6
Legal & General Managed Accum	1113.1		1171.7
London & Manchester Flexible Acc		759.8	
London Equity		1248.50	
London Mixed		778.20	
M & G Managed Bond Acc	1116.6		1172.5
M & G Recovery Bond Acc	1017.5		1069.5
Merchant Investors Managed	625.6		658.5
Midland Balanced	112.3		118.2
Midland UK Equity	137.0		144.3
NatWest Growth Managed	158.0		165.8
NatWest Security Mgd	137.8		144.8
NatWest UK Equity	177.6		189.3
Norwich Union Mgd Ex NUAM MF	1962.8		2067.2
Norwich Union Unitised Managed	193.43		203.61
Norwich Union Unitised With Profits	173.83		182.97
NPI Managed	640.9		674.6
Pearl Equity Net	385.4		405.6
Pearl Managed	335.5		353.2
Prudential Prufund Managed	470.0		482.1
Prudential Indiv Mgd Ser 2	1059.9		1115.7
Royal Life Managed	521.7		549.1
Royal Scottish Growth Managed	222.7		234.5
Royal Scottish UK Equity	233.5		245.8
Scottish Amicable Equity Ser 1	591.0		624.8
Scottish Amicable Managed Ser 1	606.8		638.8
Scottish Equitable Mixed	347.7		365.1
Scottish Life Managed	398.8		418.1
Scottish Mutual Safety	290.8		306.1
Scot Prov Inst Blue Chip	231.1		243.2
Scot Prov Inst With-Profits	139.6		147.0
Scottish Widows International	628.6		663.1
Scottish Widows Mixed	609.7		641.8
Standard Equity	1487.2		1565.3
Standard European	224.4		236.2
Standard Far East	176.6		185.9
Standard Fixed Interest	479.0		504.3
Standard Managed	950.7		1000.8
Sun Alliance Equity	1312.1		1381.2
Sun Alliance Managed	966.9		1017.8
Sun Life Deferred Distribution	220.5		232.2
Sun Life Distribution	332.9		350.5
Sun Life Equity Acc	2139.7		2252.4
Sun Life Managed Acc	1217.5		1281.7
Sun Life Can Century Eq		178.2	
Sun Life Can Century Mgd		164.5	
Sun Life Can Maple Leaf Eq Acc	776.8		817.6
Sun Life Can Maple Leaf Mgd Acc	534.2		562.3
TSB Equity	619.2		646.8
TSB Homebuyer	301.8		317.5
TSB Managed	381.8		402.0

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الأصل

Woods plans Little Indian ambush

John Cobb on the aspiring trainer out to take famous scalps at Sandown

When Sean Woods realised that he was not going to become one of the top four or five jump jockeys, he decided that being in the second division was unacceptable and changed careers. After five years in his new profession as a trainer he is still some way from reaching the front rank, but each season brings him several winners closer. Punters or prospective owners looking for a trainer likely to make the highest grade should not take their eye off the 32-year-old Newmarket man.

If things go to plan on Friday he will not be difficult to find. Woods has the week's most important prize, the Group Three Solario Stakes, in his sights for his winning juvenile Little Indian. He is not the only one. John Dunlop plans to run Haami, already among the favourites for next year's 2,000 Guineas, and there are entrants from the camps of Saeed *bin Suroor*, Henry Cecil and Aidan O'Brien. Another possible rival in the Sandown race, Docksider, from the John Hills stable, finished a place ahead of him in the Vintage Stakes at Goodwood last time.

The point to remember, though, when assessing Little Indian's chance of taking some famous scalps is Woods's philosophy of not accepting second best.

"The track at Goodwood didn't suit him too well and Sandown will be much more to his liking," Woods said yesterday. "He was caught a little flat-footed behind Docksider, but made up eight lengths in the final furlong. He doesn't catch the eye, but the machinery is there."

The machinery is in place too at Woods's La Grange Stables on Newmarket's Snailwell Road. Having restored the abandoned yard, Woods has installed a solarium, weighbridge, horsewalker and indoor ride. His seven acres of paddocks and the facilities available to him at his family's Woodsway Stud at nearby Tuddenham would be the envy of many of his more established neighbours.

At La Grange there are 60 boxes and not all of them are occupied. But while most trainers are anxious to snare new faces to help pay the bills, Woods's attitude to life holds sway.

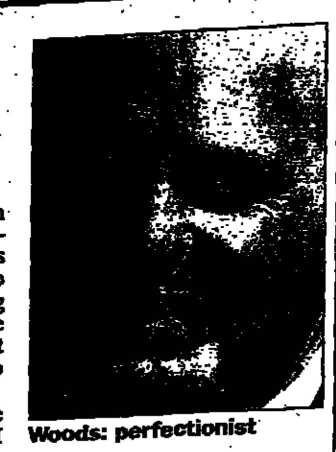
"I'm choosy about who I train for," he said. "Ninety per cent of my clients would now be personal friends.

"I wouldn't run a horse at Ascot just because an owner wants a day out. I make sure I send horses where they've got a chance and my places-to-runs record bears that out."

"My owners pay me money, a lot of money, to make decisions and do the job my way. So that's what I do. The man on the street has his own opinion about how racehorses should be trained, but if I go into a butcher's I'm not going to tell him how to cut a piece of meat and I don't expect other people to tell me how to do my job."

Woods does his job with the help of "very good staff – I won't tolerate mediocrity", unsurprisingly. He also has the assistance of his elder brother Dwayne, a bloodstock agent, when making purchases at the sales. Little Indian was bought for 21,000 guineas at last year's October Sales and looks cheap, particularly as he will be contesting a race with £30,000 in prize money on Friday.

Woods, born in Bangalore and fluent in Hindi and Tamil, is part of a training dynasty that has had outstanding success in India. Another brother, Wendyll, was stable jockey, but is now in Hong Kong, riding for their uncle.



Woods: perfectionist

On the home front, Woods has another fine two-year-old prospect in Wuxi Venture, third to Godolphin's Classic hope Fantasy Island at Newmarket last Friday.

Then there is Green Card, who ran in the 2,000 Guineas and chased home Salmon Ladder at Windsor last week, and Ukraine Venture, who has been rested since disappointing in the Oaks and is being prepared for an autumn campaign.

Exact plans for the filly are fluid, but wherever she runs she will be expected to succeed. Mediocrity will not be tolerated.

Stowaway and Patriarch share top billing

Stowaway and Silver Patriarch who fought out a stirring finish to York's Great Voltigeur Stakes last week, headed the William Hill market for the St Leger when the latest acceptors were prematurely released yesterday.

A total of 18 horses remain in the final Classic of the season, to be staged at Doncaster on 13 September.

The list of runners was not expected to be released until today. However, William Hill released their prices ahead of publication leaving the Doncaster executive no option but to publish the acceptors.

Both Stowaway, trained by Saeed bin Suroor, and the John Dunlop charge Silver Patriarch are available at 5-2 with the Irish Derby runner up, Dr Johnson, next best at 7-1.

The Tote Jackpot pool at Ripon yesterday reached £378,678.30. With 87 pence in winning tickets a dividend of £268,861.50 was declared to a £1 stake. There were seven different winning ticket-holders with 10p winner scooping over £26,000 from a bet placed on the track. The dividend outstripped the equivalent starting-price accumulator, which paid £23,940 for a £1 outlay. The sum of £49,228.18 is carried forward to Carlisle's Jackpot today.

Fitzgerald chases ten wins on the trot

Mick Fitzgerald attempts to continue a remarkable sequence at Worcester today. The jockey rode a four-timer from as many rides at Huntingdon on Monday, completing a sequence of nine winners on the trot.

The run began with Irie Mon at Market Rasen on 8 August, followed by three races at Stratford on 16 August and then Irie Mon again at Market Rasen on Saturday. It is all the more remarkable as it has been achieved for seven different trainers.

The record for successive winners is 12, set by Sir Gordon Richards in 1933. The last jockey to come near that total was Phil Tuck with 10 in September 1986, a figure also achieved by Johnny Gilbert in 1959.

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Kilvine (Brighton 3.20)
NB: Song Mist (Brighton 4.50)

Fitzgerald has one ride today when he partners General Glow for David Evans in the opening maiden hurdle. The gelding, who has shown fair form over middle distances on the Flat this year, faces 12 rivals.

Last season's leading amateur jump jockey, Robert Thornton, joins the paid ranks today and has the conditional jump jockey's title in his sights.

Nineteen-year-old Thornton will be hoping to repeat his success as an amateur, where he rode 30 winners in only his second full season.

■ Cross The Border is likely to run at Musselburgh tomorrow, at Sandown the following day or at Chester on Saturday, after having his third race in four days at Epsom on Monday. The David Nicholls-trained sprinter won at Thirsk and Beverley on Friday and Saturday respectively before finishing third to Gaelic Storm on Monday.

■ The Rae Guest-trained My Emma has been well backed with Coral for the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe and has been shortened to 14-1 from 16-1.

Whitaker aims for positive start on Welham

Equestrianism

GENEVIEVE MURPHY *reports from Mannheim*

At an age when most horses would be starting to lose their sparkle, John Whitaker's 17-year-old mount Virtual Village Welham seems to get better and better.

Having captured the Aachen Grand Prix among other big prizes this year, the pair seem to represent Britain's best chance of taking the individual title at The European Show Jumping Championships, which begin here today with two warm-up classes.

Whitaker and Welham have established a wonderful rapport, enabling the rider to ask awkward questions in the knowledge that he will get a willing response. This should be valuable in tomorrow's speed competition, which is the first of the three contests that decide the individual championship. Getting off to a good start is essential if the Briton is to be in with a chance of overall victory after the other two legs, which take place on Friday and Sunday.

Britain last won the individual title at Rotterdam in 1989, when John Whitaker triumphed on the great Milton and in the process defeated his younger brother, Michael. This year the elder brother may have most to fear from Hugo Simon, the Austrian rider who prevented him from winning this year's World Cup final in Gothenburg, and Ludger Beerbaum, Germany's 1992 Olympic champion.

Although the British selectors have delayed naming their team of four until after today's warm-up classes, there can be no doubt that John Whitaker will be one of the chosen quartet. The remaining places will go to three of the other four members of the squad: Geoff Billington, Di Lampard, Robert Smith and Michael Whitaker. All four have realistic claims to a place, so whoever is omitted from the team is likely to be bitterly disappointed.

In the last six years, Britain has won the team title on three occasions and finished second on the other three. They must be well fancied to regain the title, which they last won in 1989, when it is decided over the first two legs tomorrow and on Friday.

British hopes have risen since the Nations Cup in Rotterdam last weekend, where the Whitaker brothers, Lampard and Smith finished joint second with the Netherlands in this team contest which was won by the United States.

The Netherlands had been regarded as favourites – especially as the Germans are without their world champion, Franke Sloothaak, who is sidelined through injury.

Germany, so powerful when winning team and individual gold medals at last year's Olympic Games in Atlanta, are also without their individual Olympic champion, Ulrich Kirchhoff. His superb mount, Jus de Pommes, died last year after an attack of colic.

The British quartet includes three riders – Lampard, Smith and Michael Whitaker – who gained automatic selection having filled the top three places in the new series of team trials. Although the trials came in for much criticism, these three have kept their form impressively. If they go well here, it could be impossible to argue against repeating the experiment next year.

TODAY'S NUMBER

2.5m

The signing-on bonus in dollars [£1.56m] which pitcher Rick Ankiel received for joining the St Louis Cardinals, rather than attending Miami University – the largest bonus for a player taken on the amateur draft, beating the $2m Pittsburgh gave Kris Benson last year.

BRIGHTON

HYPERION

2.20 Simply Super — 3.50 Silver Marble
2.50 Pearl Dawn — 4.20 Municipal Girl
3.20 Mowjood — 4.50 Dande Flyer

GOING: Good to Firm.
STALLS: 1m 2f – outside; rest – inside.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: Low numbers best over 5f & 6f.
■ Left-hand, U-shaped course, undulating and sharp.
■ Racecourse is east of the town. Follow signposts from town centre. Brighton railway station is one mile away (fast service from London, Victoria). ADMISSION: Club £12 (accompanied under-16s free); Tattersalls £8; Picnic area £4 (inc £4 per car). CAR PARK: Free.
■ LEADING TRAINERS: R Hannon — 34 winners from 200 runners gives a success ratio of 17%; R Akehurst 22 from 94 (23.4%); G L Moore 21 from 173 (12.1%); S Dow 20 from 150 (13.3%).
■ LEADING JOCKEYS: T Quinn 53 wins from 220 rides gives a success ratio of 24.1%; M Roberts 23 from 87 (26.4%); Pat Eddery 20 from 60 (20%); Dane O'Neill 20 from 100 (18.3%).
■ FAVOURITES: 198 wins in 554 races (35.7%).
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: The Green Grey (visored) (3.50); Rowlandsons Stud (4.50).
WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: Guesstimation (2.50) won at Warwick on Monday.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Chikapenny (2.20), Smarter Charter (2.50) & Mystical (4.20) have been sent 281 miles by Mrs L Stubbs from Huton Sessay, North Yorkshire; La Doyenne (3.50) sent 270 miles by C Booth from Foston, North Yorkshire.

2.20 EBF MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS F) £3,300 added 2YO fillies 6f Penalty Value £2,485

1 033643 CHIKAPENNY (18) (John A Stokey) Mrs L Stubbs 8 11 ....S Sanders 6 V
2 00 GINNIESHOPE (41) (P J Wightman) S Knight 8 11 ....R Ffrench (3) 2
3 2600 JUS'CHILLIN' (19) (Mrs Shelley Dwyer) C Dwyer 8 11 ....K Fallon 5
4 6 LADY LAPHROAIG (FR) (6) (Friends of Laphroaig) W Muir 8 11 ....J Reid 1
5 006 SECRET TANGO (22) (The White Family) A P Jones 8 11 ....A Clark 4
6 SIMPLY SUPER (D Sell) C Brittain 8 11 ....M Roberts 3
– 6 declared –
BETTING: 5-4 Chikapenny, 5-2 Simply Super, 3-1 Lady Laphroaig, 12-1 Jus'chillin', 20-1 Secret Tango, 33-1 Ginnieshope
1996: Chain Reaction 8 11 W R Swinburn 11-10 fav (M Jarvis) drawn (1) 4 ran

FORM GUIDE
Chikapenny and Jus'chillin have the experience for this tricky track, but LADY LAPHROAIG may possess more ability. It wasn't a bad first showing by the daughter of Elmaamul at Salisbury last week and, unlike the other pair, Lady Laphroaig must have a decent chance of improving. A 33-1 shot in a big field, she finished a ten-length sixth to Brian Meehan's Bermuda Boy. Chikapenny has been beaten in blinkers and a visor. She led the Richard Hannon winner Phone Alex for five furlongs at Lingfield last time so this course offers her some hope. Jus'chillin had no chance in a Newmarket nursery last time after being hammered on two previous attempts. She did finish a four-length second to hotpot Snawdon at Yarmouth on her debut and the change of rider (Kieren Fallon for Neil Varley) can only be a help. A Clive Brittain newcomer winner at Brighton would be a surprise so Simply Super is best watched.
Selection: LADY LAPHROAIG

2.50 DITCHLING CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS F) £3,300 added 1m 2f Penalty Value £2,277

1 330000 SMARTER CHARTER (14) (BF) (Consultco Ltd) Mrs L Stubbs 4 9 12 ....K Fallon 4
2 665185 NIGHT WINK (USA) (10) (CD) (Mrs D Benjamin) G L Moore 5 9 10 ....Martin Dwyer (3) 5
3 121501 GUESSTIMATION (USA) (2) (D) (Exclusive Two Partnership) J Pearce 8 9 8 ....G Bardwell 9
4 550060 DANCING LAWYER (15) (C) (Vintage Services Limited) K Burke 6 9 4 ....S Sanders 3
5 0 PAYASO (9) (David Hallums) R Stronge 3 9 4 ....J Stack 7
6 036326 RUNIC SYMBOL (15) (D) (D Sloan) M Blanshard 6 9 2 ....J Quinn 2
7 6550-0 AREISH (228) (Speedforce Racing Limited) J Ffitch-Heyes 4 8 9 ....A Whelan (3) 6
8 500022 REHAAB (14) (D) (Baker Street Partnership) D Morris 4 8 9 ....R Cochrane 10 V
9 636503 PEARL DAWN (12) (C) (Mrs E Keep) P Clarke 7 8 5 ....R Ffrench (3) 1
10 000504 SWEET SEVENTEEN (21) (Derek Weeden) H Collingridge 4 8 5 ....Aimee Cook (5) 8
11 000261 FLOOD'S HOT STUFF (12) (C) (Philip Kirby) N Littmoden 3 8 3 ....N Adams 11 V
– 11 declared –
BETTING: 3-1 Rehaab, 7-2 Pearl Dawn, 9-2 Night Wink, 5-1 Smarter Charter, 6-1 Flood's Hot Stuff, 7-1 Guesstimation, 25-1 Dancing Lawyer, Runic Symbol, 33-1 others
1996: Ketabi 5 9 4 T Quinn 7-1 (R Akehurst) drawn (2) 8 ran

FORM GUIDE
It makes sense to book Kieren Fallon for Smarter Charter after their winning days when with Lynda Ramsden. The partnership linked up at the big Goodwood meeting to finish seventh of 18 to Tribal Peace, and Smarter Charter was without Fallon when beaten a mile at Beverley next time. He can be totally forgotten if he doesn't make the frame in this week claimer, but NIGHT WINK can beat him. The pair meet on similar terms to a handicap and Night Wink may just be the more reliable after passing the claimer test with a three-length win on the course three outings ago (subsequent runs being in handicaps). Rehaab won a maiden for Alec Stewart last year and Dave Morris has found the key to her. A visor was fitted for a Yarmouth seller (second to Welsh Mountain) and she bettered that when splitting Your Most Welcome and Statajack at Salisbury after being short of room. Rehaab must nearly win this if reproducing that form. Guesstimation, awarded the race on the demotion of Haroldon in a Warwick seller on Monday, is on much faster ground today and may not contain Night Wink on these terms. Pearl Dawn is trying a new trip after her third to Step On Degas here (7f), as is recent course claimer winner Flood's Hot Stuff. Dancing Lawyer, a winner here three years ago, could beat these on his old form with Brian Meehan, and Neil Burke will be wiser about him after two showings.
Selection: NIGHT WINK

3.20 QUEENS PARK CENTENARY HANDICAP (CLASS E) £4,025 added 1m Penalty Value £3,096

1 -00033 KILVINE (7) (Khalifa Dasmal) W Haggas 4 10 0 ....S Drowne 2
2 -88200 DESERT TIME (27) (D) (Spoof Racing) C Horgan 7 9 13 ....Paul Eddery 15
3 0-3323 MOWJOOD (USA) (14) (BF) (Maktoum Al Maktoum) M Stoute 3 9 9 ....J Reid 12 V
4 658805 KILDEE LAD (15) (J F O'Donovan) A P Jones 7 9 7 ....A Clark 10
5 032230 CALAMANDER (28) (Philip Blacker Studio Partnership) W Muir 3 9 5 ....M Roberts 11
6 465200 CLOUDS HILL (FR) (14) (Mrs P Jubert) R Hannon 4 9 1 ....Dane O'Neill 7 V
7 860-00 SEJAAL (90) (D) (Julian Snow) R Akehurst 5 9 1 ....S Sanders 13
8 223242 SAMARA SONG (15) (Turton Builders) I Williams 4 9 0 ....K Fallon 3
9 068600 SAXON BAY (37) (A J Richards) K Cunningham-Brown 5 8 12 ....Martin Dwyer (3) 6
10 44-054 KING PARROT (32) (D) (Lord Huntingdon) Lord Huntingdon 9 8 10 ....Aimee Cook (5) 14
11 002023 FAILED TO HIT (11) (Mrs Maggie McCleen) N Littmoden 4 8 5 ....T G McLaughlin 5 B
12 008230 DR WOODSTOCK (23) (Martyn Meade) M Meade 3 7 12 ....J Lowe 9
13 604002 ROCKY WATERS (USA) (23) (Philip Saunders) M Usher 8 7 10 ....A Nicholls (7) 1 V
14 650233 MUARA BAY (21) (P A Ibbs) G Lewis 3 7 10 ....R Ffrench (3) 4
15 800400 SOVIET LADY (12) (Custom Racing) J Long 3 7 10 ....G Bardwell 8
– 15 declared –
Minimum weight: 7st 10lb. True handicap weights: Rocky Waters 7st 9lb. Muara Bay 7st 7lb. Soviet Lady 7st 5lb.
BETTING: 3-1 Mowjood, 7-1 Samara Song, Muara Bay, 8-1 Kilvine, Rocky Waters, 10-1 Failed To Hit, 12-1 Calamander, King Parrot, 14-1 others
1996: Balance Of Power 4 9 7 T Quinn 7-1 (R Akehurst) drawn (10) 10 ran

FORM GUIDE
With Reg Akehurst winning the race last year the eye automatically falls on Sejaal, who has six noughts for Akehurst since a win for John Dunlop (three-runner race). If Sejaal is a horse who goes well when fresh (first run for three months) then this could be his day. Mowjood is slow and today's attempt over a shorter trip is a surprise move. There is every chance of a good run by Desert Time now that he's dropped in class, especially in view of the stable's recent win with Thatchmaster. Talking of Thatchmaster leads us to KING PARROT, who beat that gelding at Lingfield last year on the middle leg of his hat-trick. Two of the wins were with Aimee Cook, who landed the second leg of Lord Huntingdon's double at Epsom on Monday on Present Situation. King Parrot is nicely handicapped, he was a decent fifth to Eurobox Boy (winner again since) over this trip at Salisbury last month and his one run since was over the slightly shorter distance at Lingfield (two-length fourth to Saley Ana). Clouds Hill is tried again in a visor after little improvement earlier in the season. His latest form with a little known claimer can be dismissed and his Goodwood second to No Extras obviously puts him smack in the picture with Dane O'Neill up. Kilvine looks beatable with 10st even after a good recent third to Dummer Golf Time at Kempton, and Muara Bay takes the eye only because Royston Ffrench rode a winner for the stable on this course 12 days ago. Samara Song ran up to his Salisbury form with Absolute Utopia at Bath last time but he is only moderate, and Calamander is hard to fancy on her latest bad run at Salisbury. Kildee Lad seemed to get the mile okay last time, but the weight may beat this winning sprinter.
Selection: KING PARROT

3.50 GORING MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS F) £3,300 added 3YO 7f Penalty Value £2,277

1 405-50 INCATIME (14) (Peter Colley Racing) A Foster 9 0 ....T Sprake 6
2 -50000 THE GREEN GREY (316) (Mrs Barbara Jean Mann) W Muir 9 0 ....Martin Dwyer (3) 5 V
3 005533 LA DOYENNE (12) (Mrs J B Robinson) C Booth 8 9 ....K Fallon 1
4 03035 LAS VISTAS (21) (R H Coombes) H Collingridge 8 9 ....M Fenton 2
5 5- PASSION (309) (Paul Bourdon) T Mills 8 9 ....J Reid 3
6 SILVER MARBLE (Mrs W H Gibson Fleming) R Hannon 8 9 ....Dane O'Neill 4
– 6 declared –
BETTING: 9-4 Passion, 11-4 Silver Marble, 7-2 La Doyenne, 5-1 Las Vistas, 12-1 Incatime, 14-1 The Green Grey
1996: Mogin 8 9 T Quinn 6-4 fav (T J Naughton) drawn (4) 7 ran

FORM GUIDE
This is a very weak maiden with Richard Hannon's Silver Kite newcomer filly Silver Marble, along with Incatime, looking the only danger to PASSION, who makes a belated reappearance after a pleasing debut showing at Leicester last backend. Terry Mills couldn't have found a softer race for the daughter of Risk Me, whose fifth of 13 to Arapi has a sound look about it with the second, third and fourth all being winners this term. Incatime, La Doyenne, Las Vistas and The Green Grey have all been turned over in handicaps. The Green Grey makes no appeal even with a first-time visor so the pick of the quartet is Incatime, who had little chance from a bad draw in Half Tone's race at Sandown and gelded since his creditable fourth to Paddy Lad at Esher a year ago.
Selection: PASSION

4.20 ARTHUR BORROW KING MEMORIAL HANDICAP (CLASS E) £4,025 added 3YO 6f Penalty Value £3,018

1 044012 HEVER GOLF MOVER (12) (CD) (BF) (Hever Racing Club) T J Naughton 9 7 ....S Sanders 3
2 663640 ANOKATO (10) (C) (K T Ivory) K Ivory 9 3 ....Martin Dwyer (3) 6 B
3 304120 MYSTICAL (9) (Consultco Ltd) Mrs L Stubbs 9 2 ....K Fallon 7 V
4 202100 GOODBYE GATEMEN (8) (Mrs E N Nield) B Pearce 9 0 ....G Bardwell 1
5 352415 GOLD EDGE (18) (D) (BF) (Frank Chadwick) M Channon 8 11 ....Paul Eddery 5
6 000604 HAVAGO (12) (J P M & J W Cook) R Hannon 8 10 ....Dane O'Neill 8
7 225334 SUITE FACTORS (14) (Nigel Shields) K Burke 8 9 ....D Sweeney (3) 9
8 024005 MUNICIPAL GIRL (24) (D) (Merthyr Motor Auctions) B Palling 7 13 ....R Ffrench (3) 2
9 8-0403 GINNY WOSSERNAME (23) (R A Cay) M Meade 7 10 ....J Lowe 4 B
– 9 declared –
Minimum weight: 7st 10lb. True handicap weight: Ginny Wossername 7st 1lb.
BETTING: 11-4 Hever Golf Mover, 4-1 Havago, 11-2 Gold Edge, 6-1 Mystical, 7-1 Suite Factors, 8-1 Anokato, 12-1 Goodbye Gatemen, 14-1 others
1996: Newlands Corner 8 7 D Biggs 2-1 fav (J Akehurst) drawn (9) 11 ran

FORM GUIDE
With a soft-ground juvenile win HAVAGO can never be classed a good thing on this fast surface. But he has tumbled down the weights and has on numerous occasions when raced over seven furlongs given the impression a shorter trip would be better. Not beaten far when seventh to Plan For Profit at Sandown (7f) in May, Havago is now 13lb lower and 6lb better with Hever Golf Mover (second) when he led to this distance in La Chatelaine's race (7f) here 12 days ago. With Suite Factors, Mystical, Gold Edge and Goodbye Gatemen all pacey types in the early stages, Havago will get the ideal lead before pouncing. Mystical saw off all except Hard To Figure at Bath after her impressive seller win at Musselburgh, but has it to prove at this sixth furlong, while the minimum also seems best for Suite Factors. Hever Golf Mover showed at Carlisle (Ginny Wossername third and 2lb better) that she can defy a big weight. This is a much sharper six furlongs, her rating is 9lb higher and her second here to La Chatelaine was over seven. Anokato has been in much stronger races and he's a winner on this course – beating Gold Edge on similar weight terms over the minimum in May. He just has a bit to prove over today's sixth furlong. Gold Edge's win at Chepstow was in the soft and this could be tougher for her on the faster ground off a 7lb higher rating. Municipal Girl won a seller and has been beaten in that grade, though the booking of Royston Ffrench is certainly interesting, but Goodbye Gatemen hasn't done much since winning a bad race at Leicester.
Selection: HAVAGO

4.50 HANNINGTONS OF BRIGHTON HANDICAP (CLASS D) £4,900 added 5f 59yds Penalty Value £3,582

1 204401 TEAR WHITE (26) (CD) (A W Lawson & Co Ltd) T Mills 3 9 10 ....J Quinn 5
2 453405 SONG MIST (21) (C) (Mrs Chistopher Hanbury) P Cole 3 9 8 ....J Reid 7 B
3 604024 IVORY'S GRAB HIRE (11) (C) (D) (D Ivory) K Ivory 4 9 3 ....Martin Dwyer (3) 10 B
4 5000-0 TIMES OF TIMES (22) (C) (D) (A S Reid) G L Moore 4 9 1 ....Candy Morris 11
5 544460 DANDE FLYER (8) (D) (Dandelion Distribution Ltd) D Arbuthnot 4 9 0 ....K Fallon 1 V
6 -00505 ANOTHER BATCHWORTH (33) (D) (M Kirby/C Wakefield/C O'Toole) E Wheeler 5 8 13 ....S Carson (7) 3 B
7 600401 VILLAGE NATIVE (19) (D) (A J Richards) K Cunningham-Brown 4 8 7 ....R Ffrench (3) 2 B
8 355305 JUSTINIANUS (17) (M R Pascall) J Bridger 5 8 1 ....G Bardwell 4
9 2-3000 CHALIZ (7) (Nigel Shields) K Burke 3 8 0 ....P Doe (7) 8
10 0-5300 ROWLANDSONS STUD (2) (Alan Bosley) K Comerford 4 7 12 ....A Nicholls (7) 6 B
11 402023 BRIGHT PARAGON (14) (D) (D C G Cooper) K Ivory 8 7 10 ....R Mullen (5) 9
– 11 declared –
BETTING: 7-2 Tear White, 9-2 Ivory's Grab Hire, 5-1 Village Native, 6-1 Bright Paragon, 7-1 Another Batchworth, 8-1 Song Mist, 14-1 Dande Flyer, Justinianus, Rowlandsons Stud, 20-1 others
1996: La Belle Dominique 4 8 1 S Sanders 13-2 (S Knight) drawn (1) 7 ran

FORM GUIDE
The snip at the weights, DANDE FLYER, is on a massive losing streak but it could just be a change of partner that rejuvenates him. Dande Flyer has not given his all for regular partner Simon Whitworth, or occasional pilot Royston Ffrench, but he has the ability to win a race as lowly as this and Kieren Fallon can help this four-year-old recapture his sparkle. In the space of a week last October Another Batchworth was never headed at both Nottingham and Redcar. She is very pacey on her day and could find this course just her cup of tea. Tear White has won on the course and comes here on the back of a win at Glorious Goodwood. It wasn't the best race at the meeting and Tear White was helped by a good draw, but he must still hold every chance in this grade. Village Native returned to form on the all-weather this month and races off the same handicap mark. Ivory's Grab Hire did better than Song Mist when second to Golden Pound here (6f) two outings ago. Six furlongs is more his trip and the return to the minimum could help Song Mist.
Selection: DANDE FLYER

CARLISLE

HYPERION

2.10 Durgams First 2.40 TAEL OF SILVER (nap) 3.10 Kalimat 3.40 Tiler 4.10 Take A Risk 4.40 Straffan Gold

GOING: Firm (Good to Firm in places).
STALLS: 6f – centre; remainder – outside.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: High from 7f to 1m4f.
■ Right-hand undulating course.
■ Racecourse is on the southern outskirts of town on Durdar road, 4 miles west of junction 42 of M6. Bus service from Carlisle railway station which is 2 miles away. ADMISSION: Club £12 (OAPs & under-21s £9); Tattersalls £6 (OAPs & under-21s £3). CAR PARK: On rails £3; remainder free.
■ LEADING TRAINERS: J Berry — 19 winners from 117 runners gives a success ratio of 16.2%; Mrs M Reveley 16 from 71 (22.5%); M Channon 15 from 29 (51.7%); Mrs J Ramsden 14 from 60 (23.3%).
■ LEADING JOCKEYS: K Darley 21 wins from 123 rides gives a success ratio of 17.1%; K Fallon 17 from 94 (18.1%); G Duffield 14 from 80 (17.5%); J Fortune 13 from 107 (12.1%).
■ FAVOURITES: 95 wins in 281 races (33.7%).
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Peppers (visored, 3.10).
WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: Stoned Imaculate (4.40) won over jumps at Cartmel on Monday.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Falls O'Moness (2.40) & Peppers (3.10) have been sent 283 miles by K Burke from Ginge, Oxfordshire.

2.10 BODDINGTONS, CREAM OF MANCHESTER CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS F) £3,300 added 1m 4f

1 26400- CHARLIE CHANG (307) D Barker 4 9 12 ....J Supple 5
2 102530 GOLDEN THUNDERBOLT (14) N Tinkler 4 9 12 2
3 046222 DURGAMS FIRST (18) (CD) (BF) Mrs M Reveley 5 9 4 ....A Culhane 7
4 042010 FORZAIR (13) (D) J J O'Neill 5 9 4 ....J Carroll 3
5 050054 MONIS (9) Ron Thompson 6 8 12 ....Darren Moffatt (3) 6
6 BUNTY'S FRIEND F Watson 6 8 9 ....L Charnock 4
7 5550 LA PERDOMA (11) Miss M Milligan 3 8 1 ....P Fessey (3) 1
– 7 declared –
BETTING: 4-7 Durgams First, 11-2 Golden Thunderbolt, 13-2 Charlie Chang, 8-1 Forzair, 12-1 Monis, 25-1 La Perdoma, 33-1 Bunty's Friend.

2.40 STELLA ARTOIS FILLIES HANDICAP (CLASS E) £4,100 added 1m

1 305150 TAJREBAH (USA) (17) S Woods 3 9 11 ....G Duffield 10
2 162452 BOLLERO (12) (C) (D) J Berry 3 8 11 ....P Fessey (3) 4
3 500566 FALLS O'MONESS (7) K Burke 3 8 10 ....J F Egan 3
4 020-00 TAEL OF SILVER (16) A Bailey 5 8 9 ....A Culhane 2 V
5 000644 MAY QUEEN MEGAN (12) Mrs A King 4 8 5 ....T Williams 9
6 256040 MISS RIVIERA ROSE (12) G Wragg 3 8 5 ....K Darley 7
7 1-2260 RAINDEER QUEST (180) (D) J L Eyre 5 8 5 ....R Lappin 8
8 3-0004 DANEHILL PRINCESS (20) R Hollinshead 3 8 1 ....L Charnock 6
9 405606 TERMON (14) (D) Miss L Perratt 4 7 10 ....J McAuley (7) 1
10 000003 BENT RAIWAND (14) Enrico Incisa 4 7 10 ....Kim Tinkler 5
– 10 declared –
Minimum weight: 7st 10lb. True handicap weight: Termon 7st 6lb, Bent Raiwand 7st 3lb.
BETTING: 4-1 Bollero, 9-2 May Queen Megan, 11-2 Miss Riviera Rose, 13-2 Tajrebah, Falls O'Moness, Danehill Princess, 7-1 Bent Raiwand, 10-1 others

3.10 LABATT ICE INVITATION LIMITED STAKES (CLASS F) £3,300 added 7f

1 230020 ALLINSON'S MATE (4) (CD) T D Barron 9 9 3 ....Kimberley Hart (5) 8 B
2 203323 NEEDLE MATCH (4) J J O'Neill 4 9 3 ....C Lowther (5) 10
3 461250 TROJAN HERO (SAF) (10) Mrs M Reveley 6 9 3 ....A Culhane 5
4 015530 SHASHI (8) (C) (D) Pat Mitchell 5 9 0 ....P Bloomfield 2
5 -06000 WADERS DREAM (8) Pat Mitchell 8 9 0 ....Amanda Sanders (5) 11 V
6 6-0006 MEADOW BLUE (11) Miss L Siddall 4 8 11 ....T Siddall (7) 4
7 465234 PEPPERS (22) (BF) K Burke 4 8 11 ....K Darley 5 V
8 -04010 MIDYAN QUEEN (28) (D) R Hollinshead 3 8 9 ....F Lynch 1
9 -53521 MYSTIQUE AIR (42) (D) E Weymes 3 8 9 ....P Roberts (5) 9
10 -36224 KALIMAT (11) W Jarvis 3 8 6 ....J Fortune 3
11 61060- SKYERS TRYER (289) Ron Thompson 3 8 6 ....Darren Moffatt (3) 7
– 11 declared –
BETTING: 7-2 Needle Match, 4-1 Kalimat, 5-1 Trojan Hero, 11-2 Peppers, Mystique Air, 8-1 Allinson's Mate, Midyan Queen, 14-1 others

3.40 MURPHYS IRISH STOUT HANDICAP (CLASS D) £5,000 added 5f

1 145324 TILER (4) M Johnston 5 10 0 ....D Holland 11
2 4-2505 SAINT EXPRESS (14) (D) Mrs M Reveley 7 9 11 ....A Culhane 12
3 211000 DOUBLE OSCAR (8) (D) D Nicholls 4 9 9 ....Alex Greaves 18 B
4 252445 MANOLO (FR) (29) (D) J Berry 4 8 11 ....C Lowther (5) 9 B
5 125050 SHADOW JURY (20) (D) D Chapman 7 8 8 ....L Charnock 14 B
6 500300 U-NO-HARRY (4) (D) R Hollinshead 4 8 8 ....F Lynch 8
7 010000 RAMSEY HOPE (14) (CD) C Fairhurst 4 8 8 ....J Fortune 17 V
8 016000 JUST DISSIDENT (10) (CD) R Whitaker 5 8 8 ....Dean McKeown 2
9 -00000 MIDDLE EAST (4) (D) T D Barron 4 8 8 ....K Darley 5
10 030000 GWESPYR (19) (D) Enrico Incisa 4 8 0 ....Kim Tinkler 7
11 00000- ANOTHER EPISODE (412) (D) Miss L Perratt 8 7 12 ....N Kennedy 6
12 0340/4 MY ABBEY (54) (D) A Bailey 8 7 11 ....D Wright 16
13 221400 PALLIUM (14) (CD) D Nolan 9 7 10 ....N Pollard (7) 1 B
14 300020 DOMINELLE (4) (CD) T Easterby 5 7 10 ....D Wright 15
15 301200 YOUNG BEN (10) (D) J Wainwright 5 7 10 ....T Williams 10 B
16 036604 SUEDORO (4) J Goldie 7 7 10 ....P Fessey (3) 6
17 600540 THICK AS THIEVES (35) (D) Ron Thompson 5 7 10 ....Darren Moffatt (3) 4
18 00600 KENTUCKY DREAMS (12) Mrs A Naughton 7 7 10 ....P Bradley (7) 13
– 18 declared –
Minimum weight: 7st 10lb. True handicap weight: Young Ben 7st 6lb, Suedoro 7st 2lb, Thick As Thieves 6st 13lb, Kentucky Dreams 6st 3lb.
BETTING: 7-2 Tiler, 5-1 Saint Express, 13-2 Double Oscar, 7-1 My Abbey, 10-1 Manolo, Dominelle, 12-1 Shadow Jury, U-No-Harry, Just Dissident, Young Ben, 14-1 others

4.10 'ROLLING ROCK' MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS F) £3,500 added 2YO 5f

1 ANSTAND Mrs J Ramsden 9 0 ....J Fortune 6
2 50 CLASSIC SILVER (43) W Haigh 9 0 ....A Culhane 1
3 0 SAXON VICTORY (28) W Haggas 9 0 ....Jo Hunnam (7) 3
4 SNOWBALLS Miss L Perratt 9 0 ....J Carroll 8
5 ANOTHER WYN-BANK J FitzGerald 8 9 ....G Duffield 8
6 LOVE AGAIN M Bell 8 9 ....M Fenton 4
7 36334 MISS PUCI (11) J Berry 8 9 ....K Darley 7
8 TAKE A RISK M Johnston 8 9 ....D Holland 2
– 8 declared –
BETTING: 7-4 Miss Puci, 3-1 Love Again, 4-1 Take A Risk, 6-1 Anstand, 8-1 Saxon Victory, 12-1 Another Wyn-Bank, 16-1 Classic Silver, 25-1 Snowballs.

4.40 CELLAR SERVICE INVITATION MAIDEN HANDICAP (CLASS F) £3,400 added to stakes 2m 1f 52yds

1 40560 WELL ARMED (126) J J O'Neill 6 9 10 ....J Carroll 2 B
2 085 MURCHAN TYNE (35) E Alston 4 9 10 ....J F Egan 5
3 043 MADDIE (18) W Haigh 5 8 12 ....A Culhane 6
4 004242 PERLETHORPE (8) M Bell 3 8 6 ....M Fenton 4
5 00-002 STRAFFAN GOLD (USA) (18) G Wragg 3 8 5 ....K Darley 3
6 030 STONED IMACULATE (12) F Murphy 3 8 4 ....J Fanning 1
7 660364 PENNY PEPPERMINT (12) R Barr 5 7 10 ....P Fessey (3) 7
8 000-0 MEGAN CAREW (14) D Moffatt 3 7 10 ....Darren Moffatt (3) 8
9 005303 OCEAN BREEZE (22) J Wainwright 3 7 10 ....T Williams 9 V
– 9 declared –
Minimum weight: 7st 10lb. True handicap weight: Penny Peppermint & Megan Carew 7st 9lb. Ocean Breeze 7st 4lb.
BETTING: 9-4 Perlethorpe, 11-4 Straffan Gold, 11-2 Maddie, 13-2 Stoned Imaculate, 7-1 Penny Peppermint, 10-1 Well Armed, 12-1 Murchan Tyne, Ocean Breeze, 33-1 Megan Carew.

WORCESTER

HYPERION

2.00 Alaflak (nb) 2.30 Alpha Leather 3.00 Andrelot 3.30 Sliema Creek 4.00 Honeybed Wood 4.30 Galatasori Jane 5.00 Regal Absence

GOING: Good.
■ Left-hand course, level with long straights, easy turns and a one furlong run-in.
■ Course on the A443 by the River Severn. Worcester (Foregate St) station 1m. ADMISSION: Members £13; Tattersalls £10; Course £5.50 (OAPs £2.75). CAR PARK: Free; picnic area parking £3.
■ LEADING TRAINERS: M Pipe — 36 winners from 128 runners gives a success ratio of 28.5%; K Bailey 24 from 102 (23.5%); P Hobbs 22 from 104 (21.2%); D Nicholson 21 from 72 (29.2%).
■ LEADING JOCKEYS: A P McCoy 41 wins from 146 rides gives a success ratio of 28.1%; R Dunwoody 29 from 180 (16.1%); N Williamson 23 from 122 (18.9%); D Bridgwater 22 from 131 (18.2%).
■ FAVOURITES: 110 wins in 293 races (37.4%).
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Kilcoran Bay (4.00), General Glow (visored, 2.00), Abstone Queen (visored, 3.30).
WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: Wingspan (3.00) won at Newton Abbot on Monday.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Snap Hill (5.00) sent 169 miles by Miss A Newton-Smith from Polegate, East Sussex.

2.00 NEWLAND MAIDEN HURDLE (CLASS F) £2,575 added 2m

1 4-34 ALAFLAK (11) (BF) W R Hern 6 11 5 ....R Farrant
2 053-00 APOLLONO (32) R Lee 5 11 5 ....X Aizpuru (5)
3 0-0 FAIR ATTRACTION (36) J Dulosse 5 11 5 ....Miss A Goschen (7)
4 0FPPP- MAJOR BILL (109) J O'Shea 6 11 5 ....Michael Brennan (3)
5 2UP20- METRO FASHION (149) D O'Neill 6 11 5 ....V Slattery
6 NEWTON MIST Mrs S Smith 6 11 5 ....R Guest
7 00/ SEVERN MILL (F26) J M Bradley 6 11 5 ....R Johnson
8 FABULON (FR) (F85) M Pipe 4 11 2 ....A P McCoy
9 GENERAL GLOW (F12) P Evans 4 11 2 ....M A Fitzgerald V
10 2- ONE IN THE EYE (F14) J Poulton 4 11 2 ....J Magee (3)
11 5002-F PALAMON (USA) (F12) (BF) P Eccles 4 11 2 ....A Maguire
12 U20- SOCIETY MAGIC (USA) (207) C Mann 4 11 2 ....R Dunwoody
13 2 INDIAN NECTAR (18) R Brotherton 4 10 11 ....L Harvey
– 13 declared –
BETTING: 13-8 Fabulon, 4-1 Society Magic, 5-1 Palamon, 11-2 Alaflak, 10-1 General Glow, Indian Nectar, 16 Apollono, Newton Mist, 20 others

2.30 LEVY BOARD NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS F) £2,575 added 3m

1 542-P1 ARCTIC TRIUMPH (36) (CD) M Bradstock 6 12 0 ....G Bradley
2 -14104 RED LIGHT (18) J Jenkins 5 11 4 ....A P McCoy B
3 0P0-12 MY HARVINSKI (11) (C)(D) I Jones 7 11 3 ....Miss E J Jones (7)
4 26-32P ALPHA LEATHER (11) L Grassick 6 10 5 ....R Johnson
5 2000-1 SLIGHTLY SPECIAL (F12) D Thom 5 10 4 ....R Massey (3)
6 F/PP-0 SWEETLY DISPOSED (11) C Jones 9 10 3 ....G Upton
7 F-P40 CHILLY LAD (18) R J Price 6 10 1 ....T J Murphy
8 2EU36- DAUPHIN BLEU (158) (D) J M Bradley 11 10 0 ....Miss V Roberts (7)
9 06P6/0 BARBARY REEF (32) H Manners 9 10 0 ....Mr J Goldstein (7)
10 000P/0 FRED'S BOY (32) K Burke 7 10 0 ....A Maguire
11 1555P- RUSTIC GENT (91) D Burchell 9 10 0 ....J R Kavanagh
– 11 declared –
Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: Dauphin Bleu & Barbary Reef 9st 13lb, Fred's Boy 9st 11lb. Rustic Gent 9st 9lb.
BETTING: 9-4 Slightly Special, 11-4 Arctic Triumph, 4-1 My Harvinski, 8-1 Alpha Leather, 13-2 Red Light, 16-1 Chilly Lad, 25-1 others

3.00 PLUMB CENTRE HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS E) £4,075 added 2m 4f 110yds

1 0-2234 ANDRELOT (7) (D) (BF) P Bowen 10 11 10 ....R Dunwoody B
2 63-5PP WHO'S TO SAY (23) Dr P Pritchard 11 11 2 ....Dr P Pritchard
3 520-F1 WINGSPAN (2) (D) A Newcombe 13 10 8 (5ex) ....Mr J Tizzard (7)
4 F3/4-3 CYRILL HENRY (42) Simon Earle 8 10 0 ....C Maude
– 4 declared –
Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: Cyrill Henry 9st 13lb.
BETTING: 11-10 Andrelot, 2-1 Wingspan, 3-1 Cyrill Henry, 10-1 Who's To Say.

3.30 BBC HEREFORD & WORC NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £2,925 added 3YO 2m

1 1 AMITGE (FR) (11) M Pipe 10 12 ....A P McCoy
2 ALPINE MUSIC (F32) J M Bradley 10 10 ....R Johnson
3 FORTUNE HOPPER (F28) J Pearce 10 10 ....T Kent
4 2 KHAYAL (USA) (11) P Murphy 10 10 ....R Farrant
5 SEAMUS (F11) C Hill 10 10 ....R Dunwoody
6 U3 SLIEMA CREEK (18) P Hobbs 10 10 ....C Llewellyn
7 ABSTONE QUEEN (F18) P Evans 10 5 ....A Maguire V
8 4 HOH DOWN (28) R Juckes 10 5 ....Gary Lyons
9 LIL DIAMOND J M Bradley 10 5 ....B Fenton
– 9 declared –
BETTING: 1-2 Amitge, 7-2 Khayal, 7-1 Sliema Creek, 10-1 Abstone Queen, 25-1 Hoh Down, 33-1 others

4.00 CYANAMID ANIMAL HEALTH CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £2,925 added 2m 4f

1 13243- GONE BY (320) (CD) J Jenkins 9 11 10 ....D Yellowlees (7)
2 2-30P5 WALKING TALL (2) (D) T McGovern 8 11 8 ....M Batchelor (3)
3 1-4111 HONEYBED WOOD (49) (CD) M Sheppard 9 10 12 ....L Aspell
4 21034- SUPERMICK (F12) W Muir 6 10 12 ....A Bates
5 -46412 FRONTIER FLIGHT (4) (C)(D) Miss L Siddall 7 10 9 ....J McGee
6 12-13U SIGMA RUN (40) J O'Shea 8 10 5 ....Michael Brennan
7 /R0SP- KILCORAN BAY (174) P Bowen 5 10 2 ....A Thornton B
8 P-1333 ESKIMO KISS (19) (D) J Mackie 4 10 0 ....E Husband
9 44623- JUST FOR A REASON (105) R Juckes 5 10 0 ....R Massey
– 9 declared –
Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: Just For A Reason 9st 4lb.
BETTING: 13-8 Honeybed Wood, 7-2 Supermick, 11-2 Gone By, 7-1 Frontier Flight, 8-1 Sigma Run, 10-1 Eskimo Kiss, 14-1 Kilcoran Bay, 16-1 others

4.30 SONNY SOMERS NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS E) £4,075 added 2m 7f 110yds

1 011-F2 GALATASORI JANE (11) (BF) P Nicholls 7 11 10 ....A P McCoy
2 030-1F PLINTH (60) (C) R Alner 6 11 4 ....A Thornton
3 P204-2 JOHN ROGER (18) H Manners 11 10 1 ....S Curran
4 00-P3F CATWALKER (2) R Lee 6 10 0 ....R Johnson
5 63PP1/ FAIR ENCHANTRESS (983) N Hawke 9 10 0 ....B Fenton
6 PP/F5 BALLY CRUISE (23) K Bishop 10 10 0 ....M Griffiths (7)
– 6 declared –
Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: Catwalker 9st 12lb, Fair Enchantress 9st 10lb, Bally Cruise 9st 3lb.
BETTING: 4-5 Galatasori Jane, 5-2 Plinth, 7-1 Catwalker, 12-1 John Roger, Fair Enchantress, 25-1 Bally Cruise.

5.00 WICHENFORD INTERMEDIATE NH FLAT RACE (CLASS H) £1,500 added 2m

1 /23-11 REGAL ABSENCE (22) (CD) D Nicholson 5 12 0 ....R Thornton (3)
2 4 BANG (23) J Poulton 6 11 4 ....J Magee (3)
3 R/ BARON ALLFOURS (520) Mrs S Smith 5 11 4 ....Mr J Saville (7)
4 0- CHARLIE PIP (188) R Curtis 5 11 4 ....J Parkhouse (7)
5 2- JOSH THE BOSS (143) P Dalton 5 11 4 ....D Parker (3)
6 0- MASTER HARRY (270) Mrs J Pitman 5 11 4 ....G Hogan (5)
7 SHERMAN POTTER Mrs M Jones 6 11 4 ....M Dunne (7)
8 SNAP HILL A M Newton-Smith 5 11 4 ....M Batchelor (7)
9 BLAZING LORD J M Bradley 4 11 2 ....P Henley (3)
10 00 DUKE OF FAIRFIELD (23) A Newcombe 4 11 2 ....Mr S Durack (7)
11 6-3 DUNABRATTIN (48) D Thom 4 11 2 ....R Massey (3)
12 MR BUDDY BLUE R J Price 4 11 2 ....X Aizpuru (5)
13 POSH CHICK T Breathead 5 10 13 ....L Sullivan (7)
14 BOREHILL BABY W G M Turner 4 10 11 ....J Power (7)
15 INDIAN LEGEND Mrs S Williams 4 10 11 ....Sophie Mitchell (5)
16 KATES CHARM R J Price 4 10 11 ....T C Murphy (7)
17 LASTOFTHEBLAKENEYS T McGovern 4 10 11 ....Michael Brennan (3)
18 5 LITTLE DISH (23) P R Webber 4 10 11 ....Mr P Scott
19 MARY FRANCIS L Grassick 4 10 11 ....Mr O McPhail (7)
20 00- MISS FOLEY (102) J Peacock 4 10 11 ....O Burrows (5)
21 PENNYLET M Sheppard 4 10 11 ....L Aspell (3)
– 21 declared –
BETTING: 1-2 Regal Absence, 7-1 Dunabrattin, 8-1 Master Harry, 10-1 Sherman Potter, Little Dish, 16-1 Bang, 20-1 Josh The Boss, 25 others

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RACING RESULTS

RIPON

2.30: 1. CUMBRIAN CADET (K Fallon) 5-2; 2. Cool Prospect 9-4 fav; 3. Kustom Kit Kate 100-1. 13 ran. ½, ½. (T Easterby, Malton). Tote: £4.10; £1.40, £1.30, £17.00. Dual Forecast: £6.70. Computer Straight Forecast: £8.54. Trio: £513.70.

3.00: 1. ALPINE HIDEAWAY (J Stack) 7-2; 2. Special-K 20-1; 3. High Premium 15-8 fav. 15 ran. 1½, 1½. (B Hanbury, Newmarket). Tote: £12.20; £3.60, £3.50, £1.10. DF: £70.10. CSF: £130.90. Trio: £267.10.

3.30: 1. FOLKLORE (L Dettori) 5-1; 2. Far Removed 8-1; 3. Angel Hill 25-1; 4. Mighty Sure 14-1. 16 ran. 9-2 fav Perfect Peach (5th). 2½, ½. (D Loder, Newmarket). Tote: £6.00; £1.80, £2.80, £5.30, £3.80. DF: £29.90. CSF: £41.19. Tricast: £910.96. Trio: £498.00.

4.00: 1. ISITOFF (K Darley) 13-2; 2. Sandmoor Chambray 5-4 fav; 3. Princess Danielle 11-1. 8 ran. hd, 2. (S Williams, Newmarket). Tote: £7.50; £1.70, £1.40, £2.50. DF: £8.20. CSF: £14.67. Tricast: £86.14.

4.30: 1. MAJAARS (R Hills) 8-11 fav; 2. Requestor 7-2; 3. Moving Princess 10-1. 10 ran. 25-1 Stately favour. 2, 4. (P Walwyn, Lambourn). Tote: £1.80; £1.10, £1.20, £1.70. DF: £2.40. CSF: £3.40. Trio: £4.30. NR: Lindesberg.

5.00: 1. AMIARGE (G Bardwell) 10-1; 2. Jamaican Flight 6-1; 3. Diaab 100-30 fav. 11 ran. 1¾, hd. (M Brittain, Newmarket). Tote: £13.80; £3.50, £2.30, £1.50. DF: £39.80. CSF: £66.20. Tricast: £229.74. Trio: £41.80.

Jackpot: £268,861.50 (part won, pool of £49,228.18 to Carlisle today).
Placepot: £31.90. Quadpot: £8.50.
Place 6: £43.85. Place 5: £25.60.

UTTOXETER

2.15: 1. NORDIC PRINCE (Michael Brennan) 5-4 fav; 2. Floral Reef 11-2; 3. Poppy's Dream 9-2. 8 ran. 2½, 20. (J O'Shea, Stratford Upon Avon). Tote: £2.50; £1.40, £1.60, £1.30. Dual Forecast: £6.80. Computer Straight Forecast: £8.08.

2.45: 1. ROYAL SQUARE (Mr R Thornton) 11-2; 2. John Roger 25-1; 3. Cantoris Frater 8-1. 4 ran. 4-11 fav Blair Castle (unseated rider). dist, dist. (N Littmoden, Wolverhampton). Tote: £5.90. DF: £14.30. CSF: £45.37. NR: Iffeee.

3.15: 1. DIEGO (R Farrant) 9-4; 2. Cul de Sac 9-2; 3. Captain Marmalade 10-1. 9 ran. 2-1 fav Henrys Port (pulled up). ½, 7. (M Pitman, Upper Lambourn). Tote: £2.40; £1.30, £1.60, £1.50. DF: £6.80. CSF: £11.74. Trio: £23.20.

3.45: 1. COUCHANT (A P McCoy) 5-4 fav; 2. Darring Bridge 4-1; 3. Brindley House 9-2. 5 ran. 2½, nk. (M Pipe, Wellington). Tote: £2.00; £1.20, £1.80. Dual Forecast: £2.60. Computer Straight Forecast: £5.99.

4.15: 1. PROFESSOR PAGE (A Thornton) 5-4; 2. Bayerd 4-6 fav (fell when leading, remounted). 2 ran. won by a distance. (T Thomson Jones, Upper Lambourn). Tote: win dividend £1.90. Non Runner: Mutual Agreement.

4.45: 1. ROYAL EXPRESSION (A P McCoy) 4-6 fav; 2. Zeliba 3-1; 3. Mizyan 4-1. 4 ran. 10, 8. (F Jordan, Leominster). Tote: £1.50. Dual Forecast: £1.80. Computer Straight Forecast: £3.07. Non Runner: Sherff.

Placepot: £227.50. Quadpot: £20.00.
Place 6: £78.66. Place 5: £56.20.

Magpies face test of skill and courage

Newcastle take on more than just 11 men tonight. **Glenn Moore** reports from Zagreb

It looked a case of premature celebration when small bottles of champagne were served with lunch on Newcastle's flight to Croatia yesterday, but most of the players, anxious neither to tempt fate nor Kenny Dalglish's ire, quickly handed them back.

Tonight those players will need the clearest of heads as they take on Croatia Zagreb in the intimidating Maksimir stadium. It was not recent Balkan history which made the ground tingle when Zagreb defeated Partizan Belgrade in the last round, it was the tumult of passion for any major game. There may not always be the hatred present against Partizan, but Zagreb were still banned from Europe two seasons ago after crowd trouble in a tie against Auxerre.

The local mood has been further inflamed by the nature of Newcastle's first-leg win in this European Cup preliminary round tie – John Beresford's contested second goal, allowed after an illegal challenge on the goalkeeper by Faustino Asprilla, has been repeatedly shown on television.

That goal gave Newcastle a fortuitous 2-1 win after they were outplayed for long periods at St James' Park. They thus need a draw, or a high-scoring narrow defeat, to progress to the lucrative Champions'-and wealthy-countries'-runners-up League. Defeat carries the consolation prize of a place in the Uefa Cup.

"We have given ourselves a chance," Kenny Dalglish, the Newcastle manager, said yesterday. "They are a very good side, better than Monaco [who convincingly knocked Newcastle out of Europe last season]. But we are not a bad side ourselves – though to read what they are supposed to have said in the papers we are only going there to make up the numbers."

Dalglish was referring to reported comments from Zlatko Canjuga, Zagreb's club president, who said: "Newcastle will be frightened when they are confronted by our fans. We have no worries about this match at all. We will win 3-0 – as a team Newcastle are a bunch of losers."

Since this is just the stuff to pass around the dressing-room to provide that extra bit of motivation, Dalglish will be unworried by such comments. Stopping Robert Prosinecki, a 1991 European Cup winner with Red Star Belgrade, and Silvio Maric, who is destined for Milan, running the game as they did on Tyneside is more his concern.

Robert Lee and David Batty will be detailed to watch those two, while Newcastle's only major doubt is over whether to play Jon Dahl Tomasson behind Asprilla, or Keith Gillespie in a wide role, or Warren Barton in a defensive one.

The obvious temptation is to play Barton, but the pressure on the defence may find more relief if Asprilla, who is not the best at holding the ball, is supported by Tomasson. The Colombian remains a key figure as Newcastle need a goal – it is difficult to see them keeping a clean sheet.

Other strong performances are required from Stuart Pearce, whose experience will be important early on, and Shay Given, who has been signed for nights like this.

In front of him, the defence needs to keep a closer watch on a prolific Igor Cvitanovic, a former Middlesbrough target and the scorer of 99 league goals in six years plus Croatia's first leg strike.

Dalglish said: "I keep hearing they will bombard us in the opening 20 minutes. That doesn't worry me as much as how they organise their side for the game."

There were a few hopeful signs for Newcastle at the weekend. While they were winning their third game of the season, Zagreb were losing at their leading rivals, Hajduk Split. Moreoever, their coach, Marijan Vlak, did not travel to the game because of a back injury and is being pressured to stand down in favour of the controversial national coach, Miroslav Blazevic, until he recovers.

Nor have Zagreb done well in Europe since Croatian clubs have been allowed to compete under their own flag. In three campaigns, they have only defeated teams from the Faroe Isles and Albania.

However, unlike Newcastle, they are at least champions of their own country, having done the double for the last two seasons. They are also the only Croatian side to have lifted a European trophy, winning the Fairs' Cup in 1967, two years before Newcastle did, by beating Leeds.

They were than called Dinamo Zagreb and represented the old Yugoslavia. As standard bearers for their new country, they will be formidable opponents, their technical ability bolstered by a distinct pride.

When, at the end of ITV's coverage of the first match, Bob Wilson turned to Terry Venables and asked: "Do you think they [Newcastle] can do it over there?" the old smoothie had to summon all his media skills to avoid saying an outright 'no.'

"It will be very difficult for them, and a very good achievement if they win," was the gist of his reply. Little has happened since to alter that view.

European football comes to Keele University as under-13 players from Ajax (left) and Coventry City make contact Photograph: Robert Hallam

Playschool for tomorrow's stars

Guy Hodgson on the summer camp attracting Europe's best young players

In the sort of dream Gordon Strachan hopes he will never have to leave, Coventry City are leading Ajax of Amsterdam 3-0. Pure fantasy, of course? Not at all. It happened last week.

Before supporters ring Highfield Road in protest at missing a glamorous fixture, it ought to be hastily pointed out that the match was being played by under-13 footballers. Nevertheless the scoreline was real enough and so, sceptical City fans would argue, was the outcome, Ajax rallying to make the result 3-3.

The match was one of three being staged in the leafy confines of Keele University – Parma and Manchester United were on one pitch, the more prosaic Middlesbrough versus Nottingham Forest on another. The games, like those being played at under-12 level this week, were not for points but they were not pointless either. The future, not the present being the priority.

"Each team has five games," Dave Richardson, the Premier League's director of youth development, said. "There are no cups, medals, or records kept and only the clubs know how they have done. Hopefully, they bring a group here with a view to getting a picture of what needs to be done with their boys ready for 97-98 season beginning in September."

The five-week programme, which has incorporated teams ranging from under-18 to under-12s, stemmed from Richardson's work when he was assistant manager in charge of development at Aston Villa. Then it was apparent the school summer holidays were an ideal time to meet teams they would not normally play and from a loose collection of clubs seven years ago it has burgeoned into the current scheme.

Foreign clubs have been incorporated, Parma and Ajax last week, Antwerp and Feyenoord this. Which allows coaches – Liverpool, Chelsea, Arsenal and Derby were the other English clubs represented last week – to compare schoolboy development domestically and abroad.

Last week, the comparison was not flattering. Ajax defeating Liverpool 5-0, although Richardson would not draw definitive conclusions from that. "Funnily enough it's only two weeks ago that Liverpool beat Ajax 4-0 at under 16s," he said. "That's typical of schoolboy football. One week is high, another low.

"Ajax play 11-a-side from 10 years old on, while we, and other countries in Europe, prefer games with smaller numbers. When Liverpool were beaten it was some of their players' first introduction to 11 against 11. It'll be interesting to see how they develop in six to nine months' time."

A schoolboy coach's *raison d'être* is tomorrow and while Richardson was loath to overcondemn Liverpool for last week's result he could note a trend. Manchester United (surprise, surprise) appear to have the best British youngsters along with Arsenal. It is Ajax, again to no great amazement, whose skills burn brightest.

"Their technique is better," Richardson said. "Whenever we ask the foreign coaches why they come over to England it's for them to experience the physical side of our game. Even at this stage it's apparent. I'm hoping that in a few years' time it won't just be the physical side that they come to experience but our technical ability as well."

Watching Coventry pitch their strength and agility against the heirs to the Dutch masters were the Premiership referee Martin Bodenham and the former Crystal Palace manager Alan Smith.

Different people, different priorities and Bodenham was overseeing an off-shoot of the programme exposing promising young referees to more elevated competition. "It gives them a chance to referee at a higher level and then I and other referees can advise them as to how they can improve and enjoy themselves. Anyone who shows real promise will be brought to the notice of the FA and the Premier League. They just won't be names on sheets of paper."

Smith, still wearing an impressive tan from a recent coaching trip in Israel, was there to see how clubs are nourishing the grass roots. "European teams are more gifted," he said. "That's why we're importing so many players at the moment. There isn't the real quality there. We're about 15 years behind countries like Germany, Holland and Spain but weeks like this will help. Look at it, you couldn't do much better than this.

"The old time professional had it in his mind that football was a part-time living. They played at it. These boys are learning otherwise. They train in the morning and afternoon, they learn about diet and stretching. It's a whole re-education programme."

That education is urgently needed. "I saw Aston Villa play a Swedish side in the Uefa Cup last year and it was embarrassing," Smith said. "Our players were miles behind. This is the route we have to go. We can't go on having 500 professionals in the Premiership with 120 of them from abroad."

This week's work in Keele will go some way to correcting that balance. Maybe then Coventry City 3, Ajax 0 will not seem to belong to fantasy.

Dorigo enjoys first experience of Italian football

Tony Dorigo was yesterday reflecting on a successful debut for Graeme Souness's Torino as his *Serie B* side secured a 3-0 second leg Italian Cup win over Como.

Monday's victory sets up a meeting with Sampdoria, who signed the former Tottenham striker Jürgen Klinsmann this summer. The former Leeds and England defender Dorigo, who has Italian parents, said after the match: "I really enjoyed playing in a team as skilful as this one. I'd realised that Italian football is different from English, but it's interesting as well."

Meanwhile, Souness warned Sampdoria they can expect a rough ride in the Italian Cup next month. "I'm very happy," said the former Liverpool and Southampton manager, whose job this season is to win back Torino's place in *Serie A*. "The team played well in every department – defence, midfield, attack. Everyone played their part. The important thing now is to make sure that this kind of performance isn't just a one-off."

Souness, who won the Italian Cup with Sampdoria in 1985, said: "They are a great club and a great team. But when we play like this, I think any side should be frightened of coming here to Turin. We've got a great crowd and it won't be easy for Sampdoria. You'll see."

Felice Foglia was Torino's saviour, with the 20-year-old striker scoring twice after a goalless first half. "What I like about Felice is his grit and determination, a bit British-style," Souness said. "I needed strength in attack, but also help in coming back and he did really well."

Internazionale lost 1-0 to Atletico Madrid in a friendly in Spain on Monday. Both Juninho, Atletico's former Middlesbrough player, and Ronaldo, Inter's £18m-plus signing from Barcelona, were overshadowed by Christian Vieri, newly arrived from Juventus, who scored the only goal of the game.

Ronaldo's former teammates at Barcelona have a reputation to rebuild as they defend a fortunate 3-2 first-leg lead away to the unheralded Latvians, Skonto Riga, in a European Cup preliminary round second-leg game tonight.

Ferguson in the new Bond picture

Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, is poised for some secret service at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery as he forms an unlikely alliance with James Bond.

An artist, David Mach, has done a portrait of Ferguson which features thousands of tiny postcard images of Bond and Pussy Galore. The picture will form the dominant image at the Edinburgh gallery's special tribute to Scottish sporting heroes unveiled for the first time today.

Stephen Hendry is also featured with his image covered by shots of the earth seen from space. Meanwhile, at today's opening the athlete Yvonne Murray will see a picture of herself surrounded by thousands of miniature shots of the Hollywood actress Jayne Mansfield.

The fourth and final six-foot square portrait is of the former Scotland rugby union captain, Gavin Hastings, flanked by purple heather.

The Fife-born Mach blew up and distorted photographs of his subjects then matched them with sets of 3,000 chopped-up postcards. "It took a long time to make the portraits. They're ridiculously labour-intensive because you have to slice up so many bits to fit on the photograph. I get my assistants to do that then come along and manipulate the cards. I can explode a face or make it really skinny – that's the creative part of it," he said.

Ferguson is himself looking for creativity as he has become increasingly worried by his strikers' inability to unlock opposition defences.

Three games, three goals. But the midfielders Nicky Butt and David Beckham have accounted for two and an own goal by the Spurs defender Ramon Vega the third. The £3.5m signing, Teddy Sheringham, has appeared to be paralysed by stage fright at the Theatre of Dreams.

Ferguson admitted he was delighted by the way his champions have slammed the door shut at one end, but must be worried by Sheringham's lack of confidence. True, Sheringham has found himself without a recognised striking partner so far, with both Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Andy Cole and now Jordi Cruyff injured.

But the England man planted an opening day penalty against the post when he was granted an immediate return to White Hart Lane, and did the same with an opportunity from three yards in the draw against Leicester on Saturday.

Ferguson said: "Scorers like to score goals, that's why they are scorers, and Teddy is no different from the rest of them. So when his first goal does eventually come, it will be a very welcome one."

With Solskjaer and Cruyff definitely ruled out of tonight's night's game with Everton because of ankle injuries and Cole set to be given no more than a substitute's berth after recovering from a calf operation, Sheringham will find himself alongside Paul Scholes at Goodison Park.

Wright advised to let record come naturally

Dennis Bergkamp and the rest of Arsenal's multi-national squad have told Ian Wright to forget about Cliff Bastin's record.

There has made a great deal in the media about Wright being close to breaking Cliff Bastin's 178-goal Arsenal scoring record, and having failed to score at Southampton on Saturday, where Bergkamp and his fellow Dutchman, Marc Overmars, found the net, the England striker still needs one goal to equal it. He has the chance to match that record against Leicester in tonight's Premiership match at Filbert Street.

Bergkamp is convinced it is just a matter of staying in the groove and said: "We've just told him to relax, to keep putting on his loud, fast music in the dressing-room before the game and let the record come naturally – as it surely will."

The Dutchman added: "Nobody needs to help him particularly – he's just instinctive and he is going to keep scoring goals for a long time. It has been amazing the last week or so with players in other teams talking about who is going to mark Ian and stop him getting the record, but we all know he will get it when he can.

"He's got a big chance to play for England in the World Cup now with Alan Shearer out injured but he's got his own motivation to keep doing well and it is infectious.

"We go to games laughing and screaming on the bus and from the moment we are in the dressing room Ian has got his music and it is all pumped up. It is like a discotheque in there sometimes. It is Ian's choice and I don't know the names of the songs, but it is all about the great mentality and humour we have here."

A few miles down the road at Tottenham, where many fans feel they have had their sense of humour tested for too long, there is a fervent desire for the club's new signing, Jose Dominguez, to prove he is not a one-day wonder.

The diminutive Portuguese winger Dominguez changed the entire mood of the White Hart Lane faithful after coming off the bench to replace injured David Ginola in Saturday's clash with Derby. The 23-year-old captivated the Spurs fans with his dazzling array of tricks, causing countless problems for the Derby defence and being brought down for the free-kick from which Colin Calderwood headed the winner.

With Ginola officially "doubtful" for the visit of Aston Villa with a shoulder problem, the Spurs manager, Gerry Francis, is likely to give the former Birmingham City player – a wrist injury permitting – his first start.

Spurs' captain, David Howells, who missed the late penalty Dominguez earned against Derby, is convinced the man they call "Joe" at White Hart Lane can turn it on again. "The crowd really took to him on Saturday and he had a tremendous game," Howells said. "Joe's got so much talent and the skills he showed were fantastic. Some of the tricks he brought to the game even put a smile on my face. Let's hope he can do it again."

Southampton's goalkeeper, Paul Jones, has warned his teammates not to get too carried away by the need to kick-start the season against Crystal Palace today. The Welsh international's excellent performances have not been enough to prevent Southampton losing their first three Premiership matches.

It has piled early-season pressure on the man the goalkeeper followed to The Dell from Stockport in the summer, his new manager and namesake, Dave Jones.

The goalkeeper has urged his colleagues to reflect on the openings they have made already this term as he urged them to keep a cool head.

"If we can just keep playing the way we have so far the luck will turn for us, I've no doubt," he said.

Back-breaking: Crystal Palace players get down to business on the club's training ground in Mitcham yesterday Photograph: David Ashdown

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Ferguson in the new Bond picture

Lomu given the all-clear to train

Rugby Union

Jonah Lomu, the All Black wing, has been cleared for full rugby practice but will not, as expected, take the field for his home side of Counties Manukau this Saturday.

Lomu's manager, Phil Kingsley-Jones, revealed yesterday that Lomu had been cleared for full-contact training but needed another check-up before he took the field. "But he's firing up and ready to go," he said.

Lomu pulled out of rugby in January to undergo an intensive drug treatment programme for a rare kidney disease. Kingsley-Jones declined to say when he expected Lomu to return but, contrary to media speculation, said it would definitely not be this Saturday against Wellington.

"New Zealand rugby is at the top of the world. He's playing against the best and he's got to be at his best before he takes them on. It's been eight months so we can wait another three or four weeks," he said.

"We've just got to concentrate on getting him fit. Once he's fit, then we'll know that he can play."

Lomu has progressed favourably after being on a punishing course of drugs since January. He remains on limited medication but the drugs are not on the banned list and are unlikely to pose a problem when Lomu finally dusts off his boots.

"I suppose its like a heavyweight boxer. When he's ready, he's ready. I don't want to put any pressure on him by saying that he'll be back on so-and-so date," Kingsley-Jones said.

"I don't want the big fanfare. I just want him to come on the football field and play."

The Australian coach, Greg Smith, remains confident of keeping his job despite a record 61-22 loss to South Africa on Saturday and widespread speculation that he is about to be sacked.

Jonah Lomu has been cleared for match practice

Smith and his players returned to Sydney yesterday to news that the ACT Brumbies coach, Rod Macqueen, is the favourite to take the Wallabies on tours to Argentina and Europe later this year.

Smith, the chairman of selectors Paul McLean, and the players' representative, Brett Robinson, will all submit written reports to the ARU on the season so far, with Smith likely to address the ARU board at its meeting next Monday.

"I'm just confident that the people who sit on that board will look at everything fairly and will make an educated decision," Smith said.

Asked if he was confident of leading Australia to Argentina, Smith said: "Yeah."

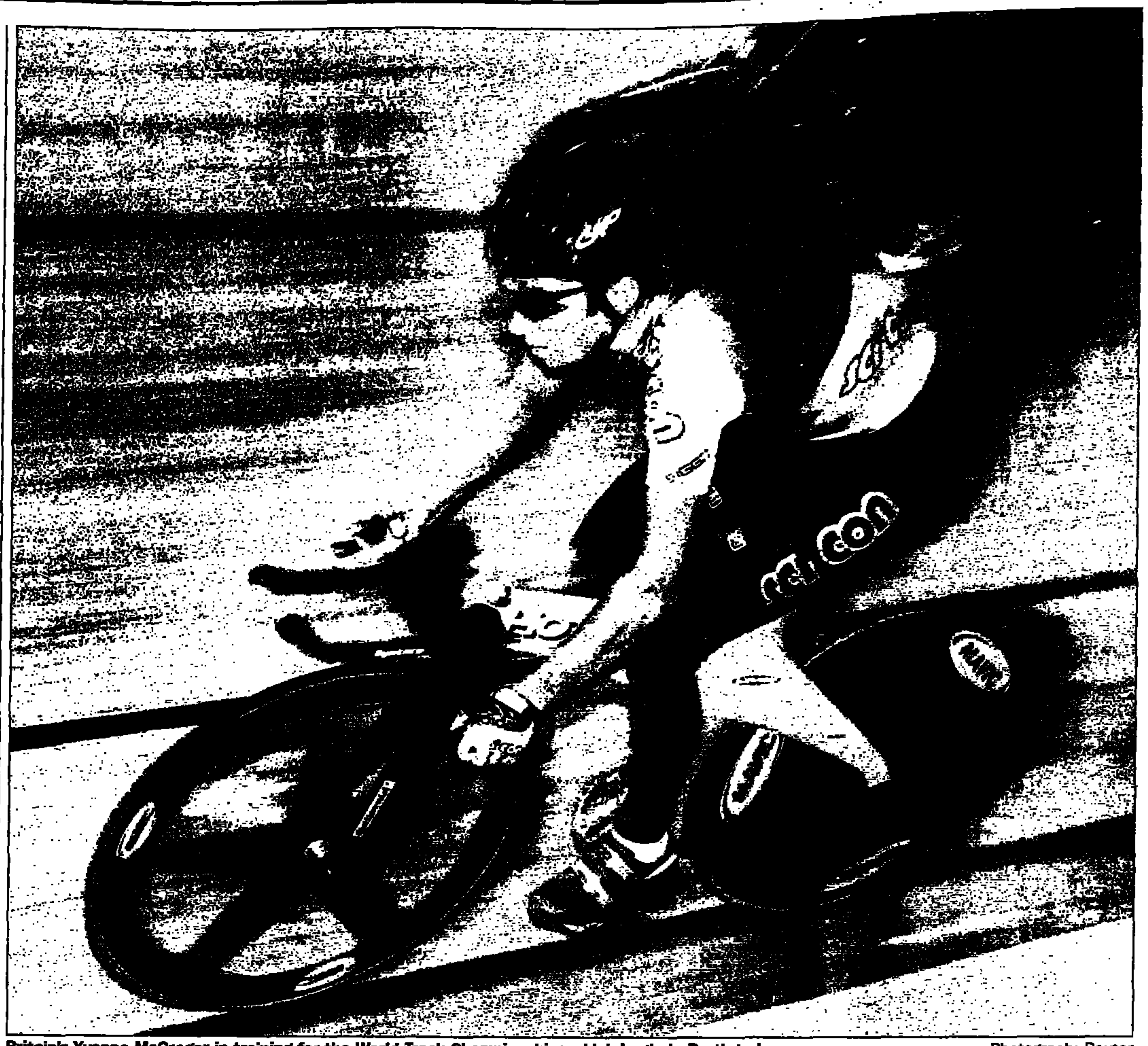
Smith said he found criticism of himself difficult to understand after an unprecedented unbeaten tour of Great Britain last year. He has been in charge for 22 months and lost all five matches against New Zealand in that time.

"We've won four out of eight [this season] and we're two-thirds through the season and all of a sudden they have got to get rid of me," Smith said. "I don't quite understand that, unless someone is really obsessed with pushing it and that could easily be the case."

He said he thought he knew who his critics were but was not prepared to name them. The ARU chief executive, John O'Neill, who also returned from South Africa yesterday, confirmed he had spoken to Macqueen and Ross Turnbull, the architect of the failed World Rugby Corporation, who is a strong supporter of the former national coach, Alan Jones.

O'Neill said Macqueen had approached him last week to assure him he was not connected with any speculation over Smith's position. O'Neill also revealed that while Jones, who coached Australia from 1984 to 1987, had a lot of good qualities, he did not think Turnbull's push for the former coach was regarded seriously in rugby ranks.

But with the biggest hint yet, when asked about the former Australian assistant coach Alec Evans, who is now in charge at Cardiff, O'Neill said that he would like to see him involved again in Australian rugby in some capacity.



Britain's Yvonne McGregor in training for the World Track Championships which begin in Perth today Photograph: Reuter

Underwood problem for Newcastle

The England and Lions wing Tony Underwood looks certain to miss Newcastle's Allied Dunbar Premiership One game against Northampton on Sunday.

Underwood twisted his left knee during the 20-13 victory at Bath last Saturday and was carried off in agony. He will undergo a hospital scan on the injury, but early indications are that he could be out for two weeks.

Stuart Legg, who scored the winning try against Bath after replacing Underwood, is expected to keep his place in the Newcastle side when Northampton visit Kingston Park.

England's reserve hooker, Phil Greening, has been given a vote of confidence by Gloucester after his half-time substitution against Bristol last weekend. Greening, who was replaced in the second half by the new recruit Neil McCarthy, will play against Leicester at Welford Road on Saturday.

The director of coaching, Richard Hill, has named the same team – including replacements – which started the 35-13 win against Bristol.

The Scotland stand-off Duncan Hodge will make his first appearance in an Edinburgh jersey this season when they play the Welsh side Llandovery on Friday. Hodge has been refreshed by the extra break after returning from Scotland's summer tour of South Africa and is now ready to return.

The Edinburgh coach, Bob Easson, also gives first run-outs to the Scotland caps Cammie Glasgow and Stuart Reid, and the Boroughmuir prop Ross McNulty, a member of the Silver Thistles party in New Zealand this summer. Edinburgh also go into the match with a new captain in the scrum-half Graeme Beveridge as they complete preparations for their first European Conference match in Perpignan a week on Saturday.

James determined to impress selectors

RACE FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIP

	P	W	L	D	Bt	Bw	Pts.
Glam (10)	13	6	2	5	37	41	189
Kent (4)	13	6	4	3	32	45	187
Gloucs (13)	13	6	3	4	29	44	181
Yorks (6)	13	5	2	6	28	44	170
Worcs (7)	13	4	1	8	36	40	169
Middx (9)	13	5	4	4	24	42	158
Essex (5)	13	4	4	5	33	43	155
Surrey (3)	13	4	3	6	32	39	153
Leics (1)	14	3	1	10	32	42	152
Warwicks (8)	13	4	2	7	22	37	144
Lancs (15)	13	4	5	4	27	38	141
Somerset (11)	13	2	2	9	32	48	139
Notts (17)	13	3	2	8	17	45	134
Hants (14)	13	2	4	7	33	30	118
Northants (16)	13	2	5	6	24	35	109
Durham (18)	13	2	5	6	17	41	108
Derbys (2)	13	1	7	5	24	48	103
Sussex (12)	14	1	8	5	21	48	100

(1996 positions in brackets)

Remaining fixtures

Today Derbyshire v Somerset; Essex v Warwickshire; Gloucestershire v Nottinghamshire; Hampshire v Kent; Lancashire v Yorkshire; Leicestershire v Glamorgan; Northamptonshire v Durham.

Tomorrow Sussex v Surrey.

2 Sept: Derbys v Northants, Durham v Warwicks, Kent v Gloucs, Lancs v Essex, Notts v Hants, Somerset v Middx, Surrey v Glam, Yorks v Worcs.

10 Sept: Durham v Somerset, Glam v Essex, Hants v Sussex, Middx v Notts, Northants v Leics, Surrey v Lancs, Warwicks v Gloucs, Worcs v Derby, Yorks v Kent.

18 Sept (inc Sunday play): Derbys v Yorks, Essex v Middx, Gloucs v Lancs, Hants v Worcs, Kent v Surrey, Leics v Durham, Somerset v Glam, Sussex v Notts, Warwicks v Northants.

Cricket

Steve James may well have been awarded an England cap this summer had he been amassing his runs for a more fashionable side. But, with the domestic season coming to its climax, the Glamorgan opening batsman at least finds himself in the right place at the right time with the Welsh county pushing for their first Championship trophy for 28 years.

James can enhance his claims for a place on the winter's West Indies tour by adding to his haul of 1,666 runs in a chase to the Britannic Assurance title with Kent and Gloucestershire. "I feel more confident and would be ready now if the England call came," he said.

Glamorgan, though, are sweating on their captain, Matthew Maynard, being fit for the trip. He dislocated a finger in last week's victory over Northamptonshire and is regarded as only 50-50 to play, but James's opening partner, Hugh Morris, has recovered from an ankle injury.

Leicestershire's South African all-rounder, Neil Johnson (Achilles tendon), and the England left-armer Alan Mullally (groin) also late fitness checks.

Kent will be without their fast bowler Martin McCague when they face Hampshire at Portsmouth. But they could hardly have a better replacement for McCague than England's Dean Headley, fit again after missing The Oval Test with a bruised heel.

Gloucestershire, third in the table six points behind Kent, have the former England fast bowler David Lawrence back in the reckoning for the visit of Nottinghamshire to Bristol.

Sussex and Surrey will be involved in a floodlit Sunday League match at Hove, where 1,900 temporary seats have been installed to bring the capacity up to 5,500.

Carlisle await League's ruling after failing to field a team

Rugby League

DAVE HADFIELD

The League is investigating Carlisle's failure to fulfil their Divisional Premiership fixture against Whitehaven on Sunday, having conceded on the morning of the match that the club could not field a team.

The Carlisle chairman, Alan Tucker, said: "We only had seven players fit. We had 13 of our first team squad injured and unavailable." Carlisle's problems were exacerbated by their Alliance team having finished its season. Most of the players who could have been called up as replacements were on holiday.

"We were then trying to get amateur players to make up the numbers, because it is a catastrophe to call off a match," Tucker said. "But we found it very hard to contact them on a Bank Holiday and we reached the point of no return."

No date has yet been set for the postponed match to be played. The League is waiting for reports from both clubs but has the power to fine Carlisle.

Salford's coach, Andy Gregory, has defended his team selection for Sunday's defeat at Sheffield. A team featuring four debutants was beaten 30-12 and Gregory and the club's chairman, John Wilkinson, were jeered by Salford fans afterwards. Gregory insisted that the missing first-teamers were all injured.

Bobbie Goulding will be able to play in St Helens' final Super League fixture of the season, against Paris on Sunday, despite being sent off against Leeds on Monday.

Goulding's case will not be heard until the following Thursday and he will be available for a match in which victory will guarantee a top four place for the Premiership play-offs. Wigan and Leeds will be competing for the other top four spot when they meet on Friday.

Jamie Mathiou, the Leeds prop on the wrong end of the tackle for which Goulding was dismissed, was released from hospital after a check-up. But, having been unconscious for five minutes, he will not be allowed to play on Friday.

The Bradford Bulls, the Super League Champions, have set a new record average attendance for any season since the introduction of two division rugby almost a quarter of a century ago. Their league crowds have averaged 15,163, compared with the previous best, Wigan's 14,561 in 1993-4.

The Wigan coach, Eric Hughes, insisted his side's season was far from over after they beat Bradford at Odsal on Monday. Hughes now has set his sights on the Premiership to bring a happy end to a disappointing season.

"If we get a win against Leeds on Friday and finish in the top four that will give us a platform for an attack on the Premiership and the World Club Championship," he said.

Bobbie Goulding will be available to play in St Helens' final match, despite a sending-off on Monday Photograph: PA

SPORTING DIGEST

American football

London, Manchester, Sheffield, Birmingham and Edinburgh have been earmarked as venues to stage Arena football – an indoor version of American football – when a European League is created in 1999. Arena football was launched in the United States 11 years ago and has teams from 14 cities contesting its annual championship.

Athletics

BERLIN GRAND PRIX Men: 110m hurdles: 1 M Crear (US) 13.11sec; 2 T Jarrett (GB) 13.35; 3 C Jackson (GB) 13.36; 4 F Schwarthoff (Ger) 13.52; 5 T Reese (US) 13.53; 6 F Balzer (Ger) 13.54; 7 S Brown (US) 13.73. **Discus:** 1 V Alekna (Lith) 67.60m; 2 L Riedel (Ger) 67.46; 3 A Seliff (US) 65.00; 4 J Godina (US) 64.90; 5 J Schult (Ger) 63.52; 6 V Kaptyukh (Bela) 61.80; 7 S Lyakhov (Rus) 60.00; 8 A Horvath (Hun) 57.40. **Women: 400m hurdles:** 1 D Hemmings (Jam) 53.26; 2 K Batten (US) 53.69; 3 T Tereshchuk (Ukr) 53.77; 4 N Bidouane (Mor) 54.72; 5 A Blackett (Barb) 55.27; 6 G Amarados (Ger) 55.31; 7 S Smith (Irl) 55.53; 8 G Schmidt (Ger) 56.22.

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Milwaukee 7 Texas 2; Detroit 7 Minnesota 6 (12 innings); Boston 9 Seattle 8.

NATIONAL LEAGUE: Cincinnati 7 Colorado 8 (first game); Cincinnati 6 Colorado 4 (second game); Philadelphia 10 San Diego 1 (first game); Philadelphia 6 San Diego 4 (second game); Los Angeles 8 Pittsburgh 2 (first game); Pittsburgh 4 Los Angeles 3 (second game); San Francisco 7 New York Mets 1; Chicago Cubs 3 Florida 1; Montreal 2 St Louis 1.

Bowls

MEN'S ALL ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS (Worthing): Pairs, third round: S McCaughtrie and G Burgess (Gilt Edge, Kidderminster) bt R Johnson and J Wickham (Totnes, Devon) 21-14; D and A Baxter (Wigton, Cumbria) bt J Homes and P Lundy (Herts Club, Watford) 14-13; T Sargent and S Brice (Wellworthy, Dorset) bt J and M King (Hunstanton) 19-14; B Taylor and T Kempster (Gosforth, Newcastle) bt R Spencer and A Bell (Cambridge Park, Twickenham) 21-16; S Parker and M Bywater (Gilt Edge, Kidderminster) bt J Hooker and S Jeapes (White Rock, Hastings) 19-12; N Cordy and D Wilson (Cleethorpes) bt A Friend and R Cutts (Marlborough, Ipswich) 23-17; S Nutman and A Tidby (Dorchester) bt R Cox and P Jessop (Belvedere, Peterborough) 26-8; D Tinsey and P Harlow (Wymondham Dell, Norfolk) bt B Baxter and L Miller (March Conservatives) 25-13. **Quarter-finals:** D and A Baxter bt McCaughtrie and Burgess 19-18 (after extra end); Taylor and Kempster bt Sargent and Brice 28-16; Cordy and Wilson bt Parker and Bywater 24-18; Nutman and Tidby bt Tinsey and Harlow 27-11.

ATLANTIC RIM WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS (Llandrindod Wells) Pairs: Round 12: England (K Hawes and M Price) bt Argentina 25-14; Wales (N Shipperlee and R Jones) bt Canada 23-14; Guernsey (J and A Simon) bt USA 39-11; Ireland (P Nolan and M Johnston) bt Spain 41-9; South Africa bt Israel 25-17; Scotland (J Maxwell and S Gourlay) bt Jersey (J Jones and S Syvret) 16-13; Namibia bt Netherlands 32-10. **Round 13:** Argentina bt Canada 22-14; England bt USA 22-16; Guernsey bt Spain 25-10; Ireland bt South Africa 20-16; Scotland bt Israel 28-16; Jersey bt Netherlands 21-10; Namibia bt Wales 23-15. **Final placings:** 1 England 22pts; 2 Ireland 20 (+152 shots); 3 Guernsey 20 (+79); 4 Wales 17 (+82); 5 Scotland 17 (+62); 6 South Africa 14 (+84); 7 Jersey 14 (+65); 8 Spain 12; 9 Argentina 11; 10 Canada 10 (+29 shots); 11 USA 10 (-108); 12 Namibia 8; 13 Israel 7; 14 Netherlands 0. **Triples: Round 12:** Argentina bt England (J Baker, G Fitzgerald and S Page) 16-13; Canada bt Wales (K Pearce, S Mansbridge and D Moran) 22-16; Guernsey (B Hurford, A Mernen and P Harding) bt USA 24-14; Ireland (I Minnis, D Kane and P Smith) bt Spain 26-7; Israel bt South Africa 22-8; Jersey (A Birch, K Horman and J Lowery) bt Scotland (K Houston, S Kelly and J Lindors) 18-15; Netherlands bt Namibia 18-17. **Round 13:** Argentina bt Canada 17-14; England bt USA 20-18; Guernsey bt Spain 26-3; Ireland bt South Africa 15-13; Scotland bt Israel 15-10; Jersey bt Netherlands 23-7; Wales bt Namibia 21-8. **Final placings:** 1 Wales 20pts; 2 Jersey 19 (+77); 3 Scotland 19 (+65); 4 Israel 18; 5 Argentina 16; 6 South Africa 15; 7 Namibia 13 (+91); 8 Guernsey 13 (-7); 9 England 12 (-1); 10 Ireland 12 (-10); 11 Canada 11; 12 United States 6; 13 (Spain) 4 (-134); 14 Netherlands 4 (-198). **Overall team placings after pairs and triples:** 1 Wales 25; 2 Scotland 22; 3 Jersey 21; 4 England 20; 5 Guernsey 19; 6 South Africa 18 (+174); 7 Ireland 18 (+142); 8 Argentina 16; 9 Israel 13; 10 Namibia 11; 11 Canada 9 (-30); 12 Spain 9 (-248); 13 United States 7; 14 Netherlands 2.

Boxing

Colin Dunne is to meet the leading contender Tanveer Ahamed, of Glasgow, for the vacant British lightweight championship by 30 November after Michael Ayers, the holder, has had to relinquish the title because of delays to his World Boxing Organisation title bout, which has been postponed twice this year but is now set to go ahead in Germany on 11 October against the Russian Artur Grigorian.

Cricket

The Cricket Foundation yesterday distributed £2.5m for the sport at junior level. The funding, in its second year, is made to all 38 County Boards as part of a development programme to increase participation, standards of play, coaching, groundmanship and umpiring/scoring. In addition, Durham University received an award of £45,000 for the second year of three years' funding towards a Cricket Centre of Excellence.

SECOND XI CHAMPIONSHIP (First day of four; today: 11.0): Tunbridge Wells: Kent 278 (C D Walsh 85, N J Llong 81, M J Walker 61; R S Martin-Jenkins 4-61, N C Phillips 4-52); Sussex 22 for 0. Bradford Park Avenue: Yorkshire 174 (R A Kettleborough 60); Lancashire 130 for 1.

Football

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND SQUAD (World Cup qualifiers v Iceland, Reykjavik, 6 Sept, and v Lithuania, Vilnius, 10 Sept): A Kelly (Sheffield Utd), Given (Newcastle), Kenna (Blackburn), Irwin (Manchester Utd), Staunton (Aston Villa), Cunningham (Wimbledon), Harte (Leeds Utd), Breen (Coventry City), Fleming (Middlesbrough), Houghton (Reading), Keane (Manchester Utd), Townsend (Aston Villa), McAteer (Liverpool), McLoughlin (Portsmouth), G Kelly (Leeds), Kennedy (Liverpool), Moore (Middlesbrough), Connolly (Feyenoord), O'Neill (Norwich), Cascarino (Nancy), Quinn (Sunderland), D Kelly (Tranmere), Babb (Liverpool), Phelan (Everton), Kilbane (West Bromwich).

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND UNDER-21 SQUAD (European Under-21 Championship qualifiers v Iceland, Reykjavik, 5 Sept, and v Lithuania, Vilnius, 9 Sept): Murphy (Wimbledon), Whelan (Oxford Utd), Carr (Tottenham), Maher (Tottenham), Quinn (Crystal Palace), Worrell (Blackburn), Darcy (Tottenham), Ryan (Huddersfield), Boland (Coventry), Farrelly (Everton), Morgan (St Patrick's Athletic), Mahon (Tranmere), Inman (Peterborough), Flanan (Notts County), Foley (Wolves), Fenn (Tottenham), Kelly (Manchester City), Scully (Manchester City), Cummins (Middlesbrough).

FAI NATIONAL LEAGUE OF IRELAND SQUAD (Eoin Hand Testimonial v Republic of Ireland XI, Tolka Park, Dublin, 2 Sept): O'Dowd (Derry City), Kelly (UCD), Scully (Shelbourne), D Geoghegan (Shelbourne), Doherty (Derry City), Curran (Derry City), Lynch (St Patrick's Athletic), Mooney (Bohemians), Hutton (Derry City), Keddy (Derry City), Gormley (St Patrick's Athletic), Cahill (Cork City), Sheridan (Shelbourne), S Geoghegan (Shelbourne), Beckett (Derry City), O'Brien (Bray Wanderers), Colwell (Shamrock Rovers).

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE Postponed matches (international call-ups): Tuesday 2 Sept: Charlton v Sheffield Utd. Saturday 6 Sept: Sheffield Utd v Stoke; Manchester City v Crewe; Middlesbrough v Huddersfield.

Sailing

Britain's 1996 Olympic silver medallists, John Merricks and Ian Walker, had a dismal first day in the Gold Fleet Races for the 470 World Championships in Tel Aviv. A disqualification, 18th and 11th left them 23rd in a 28-boat group led by Israel's Niv and Ran Shental. The second British pair of Nick Rogers and Steve Irish were lying 18th with a ninth, 12th and 28th. In the women's event, the best British after six races were Helena Lucas and Maggie Beech, lying eighth.

Squash

CATHAY PACIFIC HONG KONG OPEN First round: A Gough (Wal) bt Faheem Khan (HK) 15-5 15-4 15-11; J Power (Can) bt O El Borolossy (Eg) 15-7 15-9 15-4; M Cairns (Eng) bt A Shabana (Eg) 17-16 17-18 11-15 15-11; P Nicol (Sco) bt C Rowland (Aus) 15-9 15-8 15-5; M Chaloner (Eng) bt M Morsi (Eg) 10-15 15-13 15-9 15-5; D Harris (Eng) bt A Wagih (Eg) 15-6 15-12 15-11; B Davis (Aus) bt A Barada (Eg) 15-12 11-15 15-1 9-1 ret; S Casteleyn (Bel) bt Zubair Jehan Khan (Pak) 15-9 15-13 15-17 15-12.

Tennis

US OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS (New York) MEN: First round: F MANTILLA (Sp) bt J Stoltenberg (Aus) 7-6 6-3 6-2; M Martelli (It) bt H Dreekman (Ger) 6-1 7-6 6-3; M PHILIPPOUSSIS (Aus) bt K Alami (Mor) 6-3 6-4 3-6 6-4; G Rusedski (GB) bt D Wheaton (US) 6-2 6-3 6-3; S Draper (Aus) bt J-M Gambill (US) 6-4 6-3 7-6; J Van Herck (Bel) bt F Dewulf (Bel) 6-4 4-6 7-6 7-6; J Knippschild (Ger) bt S Dosedel (Cz Rep) 7-5 5-7 6-4 6-7 6-4; M Sell (US) bt C Mamit (US) 6-3 3-6 6-4 7-5; J Bjorkman (Swe) bt F Clavet (Sp) 6-2 6-4 6-4; A Radulescu (Ger) bt D Ogorodov (Uzbek) 3-6 6-4 7-6 6-1; J Golmard (Fr) bt H Arazi (Mor) 6-4 1-6 7-6 4-6 7-5; T Martin (US) bt J Courier (US) 3-6 6-3 6-4 6-2; D Pescariu (Rom) bt G IVANISEVIC (Croa) 4-6 7-5 6-1 7-6; B Steven (NZ) bt J A Viloca (Sp) 4-6 6-2 6-1 6-2; J van Lottum (Neth) bt R Reneberg (US) 6-1 6-4 2-6 6-4; D Vacek (Cz Rep) bt L Tieleman (It) 4-6 6-4 1-6 6-3 6-2; J Novak (Cz Rep) bt D Sanguinetti (It) 5-7 6-2 7-6 6-2; M Ondruska (SA) bt F Santoro (Fr) 5-7 6-4 4-6 6-2 6-3; R Fromberg (Aus) bt P McEnroe (US) 6-2 6-2 6-7 6-3; J Sanchez (Sp) bt A Portas (Sp) 7-5 6-2 7-5; M Damm (Ger) bt T Ho (US) 6-3 6-4 6-7 6-4; P KORDA (Cz Rep) bt V Spadea (US) 2-6 7-5 7-6 6-4; P Baur (Ger) bt J Oncins (Bri) 4-6 3-6 6-4 6-3 6-3; J Novak (Cz Rep) bt D Sanguinetti (It) 5-7 6-2 7-6 6-2; P SAMPRAS (US) bt T Larkham (Aus) 6-3 6-1 6-3; Y KAFELNIKOV (Rus) bt C Caratti (It) 6-2 6-4 7-6; R Krajicek (Neth) bt W Black (Zim) 6-4 6-2 6-2; M Larsson (Swe) bt J Siemerink (Neth) 6-4 6-2 6-3; J Tarango (US) bt D Prinosil (Ger) 6-4 6-2 7-5.

WOMEN: First round: L Raymond (US) bt R DRAGOMIR (Rom) 6-2 3-6 6-3; T Tanasugarn (Thai) bt C Rubin (US) 6-4 6-0; F Perfetti (It) bt E Callens (Bel) 6-3 6-4; M Babel (Ger) bt T Panova (Rus) 6-4 6-1; G L Garcia (Sp) bt A Miller (US) 4-6 6-2 6-3; A Dechaume-Balleret (Fr) bt A-G Sidot (Fr) 6-3 3-6 6-3; V Williams (US) bt L Neiland (Lat) 5-7 6-0 6-1; S Pitkowski (Fr) bt R Simpson (Can) 6-1 4-6 7-6; M Oremans (Neth) bt E Makarova (Rus) 3-6 6-4 6-4; M Vento (Ven) bt A Glass (Ger) 1-6 7-6 6-2; H Nagyova (Slovak) bt A Olsza (Pol) 6-3 6-0; A Kournikova (Rus) bt S Appelmans (Bel) 6-2 6-0; N Sawamatsu (Japan) bt E Delone (US) 6-4 6-3; E Wagner (Ger) bt K Studenikova (Slovak) 6-2 6-3; L Osterloh (US) bt B Rittner (Ger) 6-3 1-6 6-3; E Likhovtseva (Rus) bt P Langrova (Cz Rep) 7-5 6-4; A HUBER (Ger) bt G Pizzichini (It) 6-2 6-2; M Maleeva (Bul) bt P Stoyanova (Bul) 6-2 6-3; T Snyder (US) bt O Lugina (Ukr) 6-0 7-6; R McQuillan (Aus) bt C Torrens-Valero (Sp) 4-6 7-5 6-4; F Labat (Arg) bt A Gavaldon (Mex) 6-2 6-1; M Serna (Sp) bt M Grzybowska (Pol) 6-4 1-6 6-3; F Lubiani (It) bt Fang Li (Ch) 6-4 3-6 6-2; I Kruger (SA) bt B PAULUS (Aut) 6-1 6-7 6-1; P Hiraki (Japan) bt M Diaz-Oliva (Arg) 6-4 4-6 6-2; P Suarez (Arg) bt S Dopfer (Aut) 6-3 3-6 7-6; J Trail (US) bt A Gersi (Cz Rep) 7-6 6-2; L Richterova (Cz Rep) bt J Kandarr (Ger) 6-1 6-1; M SELES (US) bt K Boogert (Neth) 6-1 6-2; I SPIRLEA (Rom) bt A Frazier (US) 6-1 6-2; A Sugiyama (Japan) bt A Grossman (US) 6-7 7-5 6-2; J Lee (US) bt M Saeki (Japan) 6-3 6-7 6-3; I MAJOLI (Croa) bt C Cristea (Rom) 6-3 6-2; M PIERCE (Fr) bt G Fernandez (US) 6-1 6-2; A Rippner (US) bt N Medvedeva (Ukr) 6-2 6-2; P Hy-Boulais (Can) bt M Kochta (Ger) 6-2 6-1; S Testud (Fr) bt M Sanchez Lorenzo (Sp) 6-3 6-3; K Habsudova (Slovak) bt N Tauziat (Fr) 7-5 7-6; Meilen Tu (US) bt J Watanabe (US) 6-3 7-5; N Zvereva (Bela) bt R Zrubakova (Slovak) 6-1 7-5; N Miyagi (Japan) bt I Gorrochategui (Arg) 6-2 7-5; C Morariu (US) bt A Ellwood (Aus) 7-6 7-6; M HINGIS (Swit) bt T Jones (US) 6-0 6-1; J NOVOTNA (Cz Rep) bt V Ruano-Pascual (Sp) 6-0 6-4; S Farina (It) bt L Wild (US) 6-4 6-7 6-4; Y Yoshida (Japan) bt K Brandi (US) 6-7 6-1 6-4; S Smith (GB) bt N Pratt (Aus) 6-3 6-1. *Seeds in capitals*

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Football

7.30 unless stated

EUROPEAN CUP PRELIMINARY ROUND SECOND LEG

Croatia Zagreb (1) v Newcastle (2) (7.15)

Rangers (0) v IFK Gothenburg (3)

Other ties: Spartak Moscow (1) v Kosice (Slovakia) (2); Rosenborg Trondheim (Nor) (1) v MTK Budapest (0); Maribor (Sloven) (0) v Besiktas (Turk) (2); Galatasaray (Turk) (4) v Sion (Swit) (1); MPKC Mozyr (Bela) (0) v Olympiakos Piraeus (Gr) (5); Sparta Prague (0) v SV Salzburg (Aut) (0); Skonto Riga (Lat) (2) v Barcelona (Sp) (3); Dynamo Kiev (Ukr) (4) v Brondby (Den) (2); Jazz Pori (Fin) (2) v Feyenoord (Neth) (6); Dynamo Tbilisi (Geor) (1) v Bayer Leverkusen (Ger) (5); Paris St-Germain (0) v Steaua Bucharest (Rom) (3); Parma (It) (3) v Widzew Lodz (Pol) (1); Sporting Lisbon (0) v Beitar Jerusalem (0); Lierse (Bel) (0) v Anorthosis Famagusta (Cyp) (2).

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

Barnsley v Bolton; Coventry v West Ham; Everton v Manchester Utd (8.0); Leicester v Arsenal; Southampton v Crystal Palace; Tottenham v Aston Villa; Wimbledon v Chelsea.

COCA-COLA CUP FIRST ROUND SECOND LEG

Millwall (1) v Northampton (2); Nottm Forest (6) v Doncaster (0); Stoke (3) v Rochdale (1); West Bromwich (1) v Cambridge Utd (1); Wolves (2) v Queen's Park Rangers (0).

UNIBOND LEAGUE Premier Division: Boston Utd v Alfreton. **ICIS LEAGUE First Division:** Molesey v Thame Utd. **Guardian Insurance Cup preliminary round:** Cheshunt v Marlow; Croydon Athletic v Ware (7.45); Tring v Bracknell. **WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE:** Sheppey v Erith Town (7.45). **UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE First Division:** Hassocks v Hailsham; Saltdean v Langney Sports. **UHLSPORT UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE Premier Division:** Kempston v Ford Sports; Northampton Spencer v Desborough; Stamford v Potton; Yaxley v Holbeach. **SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE Premier Division:** Taunton v Bristol Manor Farm (7.45); Tiverton v Torrington. **NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE Premier Division:** Sheffield v Maltby MW. **PRESS & JOURNAL HIGHLAND LEAGUE:** Brora Rangers v Elgin City (8.0); Cove Rangers v Deveronvale (8.0); Fraserburgh v Keith. **WILKINSON SWORD IRISH LEAGUE CUP Quarter-final:** Linfield v Crusaders. **HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE OF IRELAND CUP First round:** Finn Harps v Fanad Utd; Limerick v Athlone Town (8.30); Mervue Utd v Galway Utd; Monaghan Utd v Longford Town (8.0). **PONTINS LEAGUE (all 7.0): Premier Division:** Tranmere v Sheffield Wednesday. **First Division:** Grimsby v Huddersfield; Middlesbrough v Sunderland; Port Vale v Oldham. **Second Division:** Bradford City v Stockport; Rotherham v Carlisle; Shrewsbury v Burnley. **Third Division:** Bury v Walsall; Chester v Hull; Chesterfield v Scunthorpe; Wigan v Scarborough. **AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION First Division:** Charlton v Oxford Utd (2.0); Portsmouth v Chelsea (7.0); Watford v Ipswich (at Northwood); Wimbledon v Southampton (2.0) (at Plough Lane).

Cricket

BRITANNIC ASSURANCE COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

First day of four, 11.0

DERBY: Derbyshire v Somerset. **CHELMSFORD:** Essex v Warwickshire. **BRISTOL:** Gloucestershire v Nottinghamshire. **PORTSMOUTH:** Hampshire v Kent. **OLD TRAFFORD:** Lancashire v Yorkshire. **LEICESTER:** Leicestershire v Glamorgan. **NORTHAMPTON:** Northamptonshire v Durham. **HOVE:** Sussex v Surrey. **KIDDERMINSTER:** Worcestershire v Middlesex.

AXA LIFE LEAGUE

One day, 5.10

HOVE: Sussex v Surrey.

FOURTH WOMEN'S ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL: Hinckley: England v South Africa (10.45).

SECOND XI CHAMPIONSHIP (First day of three, 11.0): Chesterfield: Derbyshire v Warwickshire; Sunderland: Durham v Gloucestershire; Pentyrch: Glamorgan v Worcestershire; Southampton: Hampshire v Essex.

MCC TROPHY Final (One day, 11.0): Lord's: Norfolk v Shropshire.

Speedway

ELITE LEAGUE: Poole v King's Lynn (7.30). **PREMIER LEAGUE:** Hull v Stoke (7.30); Long Eaton v Isle of Wight (7.45).

Other sports

BOWLS: EMBA National Championships (at Worthing); Atlantic Rim Women's World Championship (at Llandrindod Wells).

WEEKEND FIXTURES AND POOLS FORECAST

FA Carling Premiership

1 Arsenal v Tottenham X
2 Aston Villa v Leeds 1
3 Chelsea v Southampton 1
4 Crystal Palace v Blackburn 2
5 Derby v Barnsley X
6 Manchester Utd v Coventry 1
7 Sheffield Wednesday v Leicester 2
8 West Ham v Wimbledon 1

Playing Sunday: Liverpool v Newcastle. **Monday:** Bolton v Everton.

Nationwide Football League First Division

9 Charlton v Manchester City X
10 Huddersfield v Sheffield Utd 2
11 Ipswich v West Bromwich 1
12 Nottingham Forest v QPR 1
13 Portsmouth v Oxford Utd 1
14 Reading v Bradford City X
15 Stoke v Swindon 2
16 Sunderland v Norwich 1
17 Tranmere v Middlesbrough 2
18 Wolves v Bury 1

Playing Friday: Stockport v Birmingham. **Sunday:** Crewe v Port Vale.

Second Division

19 Bournemouth v Blackpool 1
20 Brentford v Grimsby X
21 Bristol City v Wigan 1
22 Burnley v Bristol Rovers 1
23 Carlisle v Northampton 2
24 Luton v Oldham X
25 Plymouth v Chesterfield X
26 Preston v Watford 2
27 Walsall v Southend 1
28 Wycombe v Fulham 1
29 York v Gillingham 2

Third Division

30 Barnet v Chester X
31 Cambridge Utd v Shrewsbury 1
32 Cardiff v Notts County 2
33 Darlington v Rotherham 1
34 Doncaster v Exeter 2
35 Hartlepool v Macclesfield 2
36 Hull City v Swansea X
37 Lincoln v Scarborough 1
38 Rochdale v Peterborough 2
39 Scunthorpe v Mansfield 1

Also playing – not on coupons: Brighton v Leyton Orient; Torquay v Colchester.

Bell's Scottish League Premier Division

40 Aberdeen v Dundee Utd X
41 Dunfermline v St Johnstone 2
42 Hibernian v Hearts X

Playing Sunday: Kilmarnock v Motherwell. **Monday:** Celtic v Rangers.

First Division

43 Airdrie v Partick 1
44 Dundee v Raith Rovers 1
45 Hamilton v Ayr 1
46 St Mirren v Morton X
47 Stirling v Falkirk X

Second Division

48 East Fife v Clyde 1
49 Forfar v Clydebank 2

Also playing – not on coupons: Second Division: Livingston v Queen of the South; Stenhousemuir v Inverness Caledonian Thistle; Stranraer v Brechin City. **Third Division:** Berwick v Arbroath; Dumbarton v Alloa; East Stirlingshire v Queen's Park; Montrose v Cowdenbeath; Ross County v Albion Rovers.

Four draws: Arsenal v Tottenham; Charlton v Manchester City; Plymouth v Chesterfield; Aberdeen v Dundee Utd.

Five aways: Sheffield Wednesday v Leicester; Preston v Watford; Hartlepool v Macclesfield; Rochdale v Peterborough; Forfar v Clydebank.

Ten homes: Chelsea v Southampton; Manchester Utd v Coventry; Nottingham Forest v Queen's Park Rangers; Portsmouth v Oxford Utd; Sunderland v Norwich City; Wolves v Bury; Bristol City v Wigan; Burnley v Bristol Rovers; Cambridge Utd v Shrewsbury; Airdrie v Partick Thistle.

Croatian crunch
Glenn Moore on Newcastle United's European adventure, page 22

sport

Euro playschool
Ajax's young footballers kick in at Keele, page 22

Agassi walks out after dinner snub

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS
reports from Flushing Meadow

For someone who needs no introduction, Andre Agassi appears to have taken inordinate offence after an oversight during a dinner at the United States Open.

The Las Vegan subsequently walked out on Monday night's parade of champions, the highlight of the inauguration of the $254m (£175m) Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Harry Marmion, the president of the US Tennis Association, neglected to read out Agassi's name at the dinner for former champions held at the National Tennis Centre a few hours before the dedication ceremony.

Although Agassi's wife, the actress Brooke Shields, told reporters before the dinner: "We're here to honour Arthur Ashe," there was no sign of the 1994 champion as 37 tennis greats, from Donald Budge to Steffi Graf, did just that.

Boos from many among the 20,000 spectators greeted an announcement that Agassi was unable to attend the ceremony. He had a first-round match on his mind, but that was scheduled to take place 24 hours later.

Agassi denied yesterday that he had left in a huff. "Something arose," he said. "It was a tough call." He did not elaborate.

Chris Evert, a six-times champion, confirmed that Agassi's name had been omitted at the dinner. "They forgot to mention him," she said. There was a mistake made. You know, you've just got to take it with a grain of salt and kind of throw these things off sometimes. I was surprised he wasn't there. He should have been there."

At the same time, Evert voiced a degree of understanding. "It's a little easier for someone like me, for the players that have retired," she said. "If Harry had forgotten my name, but made a joke of it later, I'm going to go on the court. That's just life. I remember being a player, and I remember feeling as a player, thinking only about myself, being defensive, all those feelings that you have.

"I really, honestly think that Andre was hurt by that. I think that he doesn't have the confidence in himself. I think that's contributed to it. I think he's feeling a little insecure anyway about his tennis, about the way the press has sort of given him a hard time."

Agassi was not the only absentee from the parade. Pete Sampras, due to play as soon as Whitney Houston finished singing "One Moment in Time", remained in the locker-room, watching the show on television. "I was in my tennis gear, so I wasn't planning on it," the defending champion said after defeating Australia's Todd Larkham, 6-3, 6-1, 6-3. "If I didn't play tonight, there would have been a good chance I would have attended."

Jimmy Connors, a heroic competitor who won the title five times, was not here to please the crowd on this occasion, choosing instead to play in one of his seniors' events. Connors, it may be remembered, boycotted a parade of champions at Wimbledon's centenary championships in 1977.

Arthur Ashe was once sued by Connors after suggesting that Connors was unpatriotic with regard to his lack of commitment to the United States Davis Cup team. The action was dropped after Ashe defeated Connors in the 1975 Wimbledon final.

Evert, who was once engaged to Connors, expressed disappointment that he did not attend Monday's ceremony. "He would have gotten the biggest roar tonight if he was here," Evert said. "You know, he was the US Open. Jimmy, with the fist, the arm, the pelvic thrust, evoked like savage emotions from people up in the stands. He's the people's choice."

Monica Seles was so thrilled to be in the parade that she took a video camera on the court. "It was a very special night, and down the years, 20 years or something, I can show my family or whatever," said Seles, who defeated Kristie Boogert, of the Netherlands, 6-1, 6-2, shortly before the ceremony.

Britain's representative was Virginia Wade, and although we no longer have female players capable of beating the best, the nation's presence in the women's singles was underlined yesterday by Sam Smith, of Essex.

Smith, a qualifer, defeated Australia's Nicole Pratt, 6-3, 6-1 and next plays Conchita Martinez, the No 7 seed, or Jennifer Capriati. Having dropped out of the game for three years to take a history degree, Smith is in the second year of her comeback. Simply having a woman in the singles draw here is a bonus nowadays.

Tim Henman, who plays Thomas Muster in his opening match today, has consulted Stefan Edberg, who is something of an expert on the Austrian No 5 seed. Edberg defeated Muster in all 10 of their matches, winning on every surface.

Martina Hingis opened the tournament with a 6-0, 6-1 victory against the American Tami Jones, whose next big challenge will be motherhood.

Results, Digest, page 23

Rangers looking to Laudrup

Football

On the day he welcomed back his most talented individual, Walter Smith stressed the need for collective responsibility as Rangers try to clinch a Champions' League spot.

The Ibrox manager confirmed that Denmark's Brian Laudrup will play some part in tonight's European Cup preliminary round tie, when his side will attempt to overturn a 3-0 first-leg deficit against IFK Gothenburg.

Smith must now weigh up the obvious attraction of giving his captain a free rein to haul back the deluge of goals required against a lack of match fitness incurred during a three-week absence with a bout of chicken-pox.

"My dilemma is obviously whether to start with him or to wait and bring him on at a certain stage of the game," said Smith. "He is an important player for us and obviously it a big lift having him involved again. He is keen to play his part in the game, but the decision in the end will rest with me."

Laudrup was named in a 19-man squad today that also included the German midfielder, Jörg Albertz, who has recovered from a knee injury. Smith, however, was quick to point out that it was not individuals who would have the greatest bearing on the outcome of tonight's tie.

"The biggest thing for us is how the whole team performs," he said. "Obviously we have individuals who can win us games with their ability alone. But if you look at the goals we lost early in the second half out in Gothenburg, they were caused by a breakdown in teamwork as much as anything."

Rangers' disintegration against the Swedish champions has given them an enormous task at Ibrox, but Smith does not expect supporters automatically to make it the ground a fortress for the visitors. "I have never been one to ask supporters to get behind the team," he said. "I think the priority is that the team gives them something to shout about. First and foremost it is a question of how we approach the game and if we can apply a bit of pressure and cause a bit of nervousness in the Gothenburg side, then the supporters can help us by creating an intimidating atmosphere. But it is up to us to make that happen."

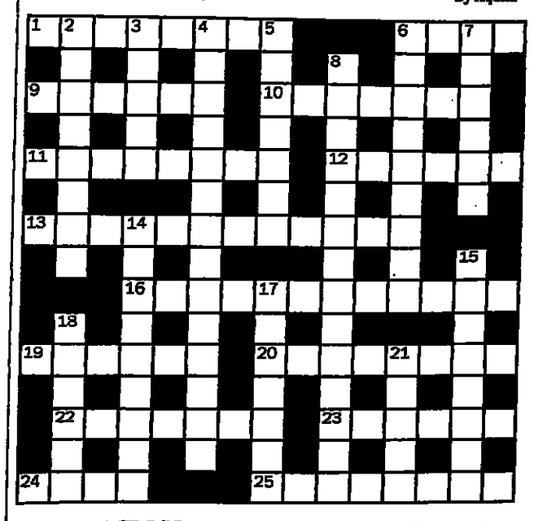
Although Smith is realistic about the chances of Rangers successfully completing their mission, he is adamant that they will not fail for lack of effort.

"We have to recognise that Gothenburg have a major advantage," he said. "I don't think we have ever been down 3-0 before either, so the challenge is enormous. We can still get the kind of result we are looking for, although it will take one hell of a performance."

Internazionale's Ronaldo (sitting) looks for help from the referee after being fouled by Geli, of Atletico Madrid, during a friendly which Atletico won 1-0 Photograph: AP

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 3388, Wednesday 27 August — By Aquila



ACROSS

1 Fragrant oil leftover in wash-basin (8)
6 Delightful place in wooded enclosure (4)
9 Reflexive form of it lifts English, in a way (6)
10 Prompt permitted in show (7)
11 Grooves in columns in order? (8)
12 Gets on in society, we hear, with poetic tracts ...(6)
13 ...representative of individual on rungs of ladder (12)
16 Physical condition of body endlessly round, facing truth? (12)
19 Trollope's law society here? (6)
20 City area still over the moon? (8)
22 Traces ghosts (7)
23 Weaving result, an overcoat! (6)
24 Match clubs, for example (4)
25 Age of tiny tree being trained (8)

DOWN

2 Long-legged creature to run off irregularly, after bet ... (8)
3 ... happening in flat time (5)
4 Passing through light as punishment? Detention safer, perhaps? (14)
5 Sally about to hold one job (7)
6 Stirring movement, taking mulled ale outside? (9)
7 Team appearing one by one (6)
8 Relish management of wet racecourses? (9,5)
14 Gives up pastry to get something moving (4-5)
15 With screeching sound of States' first ballistic missile (8)
17 Where bishop stands to superintend? (7)
18 Sauna's out of order — the place is subtropical! (6)
21 Firing cleric who loses head?

Tuesday's Solution

PARAMOUNT SPUD
R O A N E P A A
ANGEL DEATHBLOW
C U E R R A A D
TREACLE GENTEEL
I H S A T S E
SHOPASSISTANT
E B U S R S
LIVERYCOMPANY
H I I A A A N
ENVENOM RAGWEED
L I I P V O X R
MOONSCAPE RATIO
E U T G U I R M
TASK ESPLANADE

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Everton offer £3m and players for Ravanelli

ALAN NIXON

Fabrizio Ravanelli got a call from Italy yesterday telling him to report for World Cup duty – and he can expect another one from Everton should Middlesbrough decide that £3m, plus two players, is fair exchange for the striker's services.

Howard Kendall is willing to part with the forward Graham Stuart and the versatile Earl Barrett – both valued at £2m – despite the breakdown of a £7.5m cash-only move to Goodison in the summer when Everton balked at paying the Italian £50,000 a week.

The Everton manager still sees Ravanelli, who has been called into Italy's squad for the World Cup trip to Georgia on 10 September, as the ideal partner for Duncan Ferguson.

"You don't change your opinions on the player," said Kendall as he prepared his team for tonight's home game against Manchester United. "He is a top-class striker and scored plenty of goals in the Premier League last season."

Although Stuart scored the winner for Everton against West Ham on Saturday, his first-team place is not guaranteed, while Barrett's position is under threat from the recently-arrived Tony Thomas from Tranmere Rovers.

Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, would ideally like the Everton captain Gary Speed as part of the package, but he is not for sale. Should the Ravanelli deal go ahead Robson is expected to use the money to finance a £1.5m move for the Birmingham City striker, Paul Devlin.

Kevin Kilbane, the 20-year-old West Bromwich Albion winger, has been drafted into the Republic of Ireland squad for their World Cup qualifiers against Iceland and Lithuania.

Wimbledon's financial affairs are to be merged with those of the Norwegian team, Molde, according to reports from Oslo. The new company, valued at £51m, will be listed on the London and Oslo stock exchanges.

The Norwegian entrepreneurs Kjell Inge Roekke and Bjorn Rune Gjelsten paid £25m in June for a majority stake in the Dons. The partners are also major shareholders in Molde.

England will again receive an extra place in the Uefa Cup next season after finishing top of the Fair Play table established by European football's ruling body. However, it will still mean only four Premiership sides gaining automatic entry to the competition, as Uefa has confirmed that it has ended the agreement with the FA that gave the Coca-Cola Cup winners direct access to Europe.

Woods brings $650m into game

Golf

When Tiger Woods announced in a faxed statement on 27 August, 1996, that he was turning professional, nobody could have foreseen the impact the 20-year-old would make on the world of golf. According to figures released by the Associated Press yesterday, Woods, in his first year on the circuit, has brought in $653.5m (£408m) of "new money" to the sport. Not bad for a rookie.

The new money includes increases in television contracts and sharp rises in ticket and merchandise sales, as well as Woods' record-setting endorsement deals. Clearly, his youthful enthusiasm and ethnic background in an overwhelmingly white professional sport has helped push golf from the corner of the sports stage into the spotlight.

Woods has taken a fair share of the profits himself, winning more than $2.91m on his travels and a series of five-year endorsement deals worth $95.2m.

Television has quickly latched on. Last year, 57.6 million homes watched the final round of the four major championships. This year, the figure was 91.5 million – a near 59 per cent increase.

Woods' spectacular Masters victory helped contribute to a final four-year deal for the PGA Tour worth $650m, about $325m more than the deal that expires after next season.

Nike, whose golf division was an afterthought until it signed Woods to a five-year, $40m deal, gained the most, however. Sales of its golf apparel increased 100 per cent to $120m in the fiscal year that ended 31 May.

Golf has Woods to thank for its upsurge in popularity. "He has gotten them to sample the sport and they like what they see," said the CBS Sports vice president, Rob Correa.

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